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ALBERTA'S 2017 BUDGET

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“We’re not going to make Albertans bear the brunt.”
Finance Minister Joe Ceci

KEVIN TUONG/FOR METRO

PROVINCIAL DEBT
Alberta going \$71.1B into the red

HEALTH CARE
Edmonton promised brand new hospital

POST-SECONDARY
Tuition freeze extended another year

Plus more on Alberta Budget 2017
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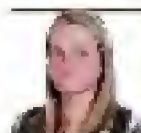


\$71B

Provincial debt triples since 2015

ECONOMY

Metro digs into Alberta Budget 2017



Lucie Edwardson
Metro | Calgary

Alberta's debt is on track to hit \$45 billion by year's end, and expected to reach \$71.1 billion dollars by 2019-20, according to the provincial budget tabled Thursday by Finance Minister Joe Ceci.

This would put Alberta's debt to GDP ratio at 10.5 per cent — more than tripling it since 2015.

When asked how Albertans should feel about this — considering they ran on the platform of keeping these numbers low — finance minister Joe Ceci said he thinks Albertans will "feel some gratitude" at his govern-

ment's commitment to maintain "important programs and services required whether it's a recession or not."

"They'll feel like we're not using this recession like previous governments have done to severely cut back on programs and services to make it problematic for teachers to stay employed in this province. That makes it problematic for nurses to stay in this province — when severe cuts in both those areas were attributed to downturns in the past," he said.

The 2017-18 deficit is estimated to sit around \$10.3 billion. No tax adjustments will take place.

Ceci said Albertans will still have a tax advantage "over every other province" with \$8.7 billion budgeted this year.

"This is an attractor for businesses when it's an affordability issue for Albertans. We're not going to make them bear

the brunt of this downturn," said Ceci.

"We're going to do things like we are now that say Alberta believes in you and we're going to carry this as a bit of a shock absorber until we get to the point the diversification starts to pay off, the economy starts to show more green and they stay working that entire time."

Ceci said Alberta's population is still growing despite an economic downturn caused by lower oil prices. Cutting services and deferring capital projects would hurt the economy in the short term and jeopardize prosperity in the long run, he said.

The province is investing heavily in tax credits and other financial incentives to diversify the economy and get off what it calls the "oil and gas roller-coaster."

A new carbon tax, launched in January, is expected to bring in \$5.4 billion over the next three

years to be reinvested in green projects, from energy-efficient light bulbs for homeowners to new rapid transit lines.

The budget's forecasts all hinge on oil prices hitting US\$68 a barrel by 2020. The bellwether West Texas Intermediate price is currently just under US\$49 — a long way from the US\$93 a barrel averaged until 2014, when prices cratered before slowly beginning to rebound in 2016.

Ceci said Alberta's economy is expected to lead the way in Canada with a growth rate of 2.6 per cent in 2017. Global economic growth is pegged at 3.5 per cent.

"Substantial risks remain," warns the government's budget analysis. "Weaker-than-forecast global growth would harm Alberta's revenue forecast, as oil prices would remain lower for longer."

WITH FILES FROM THE CANADIAN PRESS AND JEREMY SIMES/METRO EDMONTON

The reviews are in on budgetary plans



Brian Jean

"This is an NDP budget fantasy stuffed with more of the same economic experiments that have failed Alberta for two years straight. They're doubling down on a high tax, high-debt agenda that will cost families thousands of dollars every year and suffocate our economy's ability to create the jobs it's capable of."

Brian Jean, Wildrose Leader



Michelle Draper

"Our student population continues to increase and today's announcement acknowledges that, with a commitment to fund enrolment growth. We hope the infrastructure spending details next week will help address Edmonton Public Schools' pressing need for new schools, replacement schools and school modernization."

Michelle Draper, Edmonton Public Schools board chair



Adam Legge

"Hope is not a strategy. What businesses mainly want is for government to not make it any harder to survive in these challenging times, and this budget shows us there is clearly no plan to make it easier."

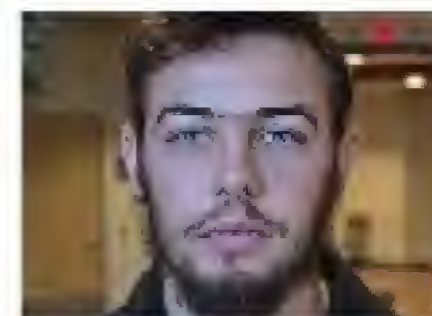
Adam Legge, president and CEO of the Calgary Chamber



Mark Ramsankar

"Classrooms are overcrowded and students with special needs require greater support. School boards have the funding available to hire the teachers and educational assistants that are urgently needed."

Mark Ramsankar, Alberta Teachers Association president



Dexter Bruneau

"Overall, this budget reflects good news for students. The government is demonstrating its commitment to the post-secondary sector, and CAUS is content with the direction the government is taking."

Dexter Bruneau, Council of Alberta University Students chair

MATT KIELTYKA/METRO EDMONTON



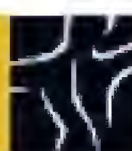
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5

OTHER WAYS THE ALBERTA BUDGET COULD AFFECT YOU

Funding announced for schools and First Nations drinking water

JEREMY SIMES/METRO



TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

1 Education

The budget has \$500 million set aside for 26 new school projects — meaning new schools or upgrading old ones — across the province, including four new schools in Edmonton and five in Calgary. More details about locations will be released next week. This comes weeks after the province announced plans to cut school fees by 25 per cent through the introduction of Bill 1, and to create a new \$3.5-million school lunch pilot last year.



TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

2 Drinking water

The province is committing to make sure every household on an Alberta First Nation has access to clean drinking water. The province plans to invest \$100 million to integrate existing drinking-water systems with federal ones.

"By building these links between communities, we can end the long-standing and shameful number of boil-water advisories on First Nations," Finance Minister Joe Ceci said Thursday.



ANDY DEAN PHOTOGRAPHY

3 Health care

The province is hoping to rein in health-care spending by signing a new deal with doctors, the details of which were released in the budget. Officials say the changes, which include altering fee-for-service models and sharing data using online tools, would make health care more community focused, while saving \$400 million this year.

Despite the savings, health-care spending is still up 3.2 per cent this year, which is at least less than the province's historic spending growth rate of six per cent.



KEVIN TUONG/FOR METRO

4 Tuition

The province is extending the tuition freeze for universities and other post-secondary institutions for one more year, which is good news for those who pay tuition. However, the province won't be providing "backfill" money to universities, meaning funds earmarked to cover the cost of the freeze.

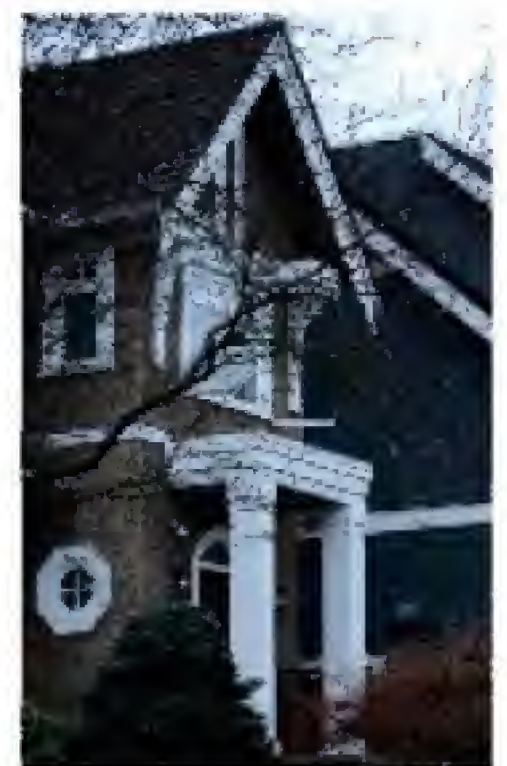
However, universities will be getting \$6 billion this year, which will cover staff positions, student loans and other grant programs.

5 Property tax

The budget had good news for (almost) anyone who pays property taxes. The budget revealed that the province is either freezing or reducing the provincial education tax for the majority of Albertans. The one exception? Edmonton.

The tax, which funds 31 per cent of school board budgets, will be frozen in Calgary and jump six per cent in the capital city. The tax is added to your property tax bill every year and varies on the value of your home.

The rationale, according to the province, is Edmonton is seeing rising property values compared with the rest of Alberta.



JENNIFER GAUTHIER/METRO

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Funding for Zika virus study

HEALTH

U of A scientists to collaborate with Caribbean, South America



Kevin Maimann
Metro | Edmonton

A University of Alberta research team is at the forefront of the fight against the Zika virus.

The U of A announced Thursday that cell biology professor Tom Hobman is one of three Canadian scientists to get \$500,000 Canadian Institutes of Health Research grant over three years to investigate the mosquito-borne virus.

"One of the main problems we are facing is the prolonged persistence of the virus in the brain of developing babies, and also in the testes in the case of men," said Anil Kumar Ansalem, who is a member of Hob-



Members of Tom Hobman's University of Alberta research team studying the Zika virus. CONTRIBUTED

man's team.

"So what we are trying to understand is basically how the virus is able to overcome

the antiviral response within humans, and how they are able to really manage to persist for very long and cause

damage."

Zika's ability to stay in the body for months differentiates it from other mosquito-



One of the main problems we are facing is the prolonged persistence of the virus in the brain of developing babies.

Anil Kumar

borne viruses like Dengue and West Nile, which typically last one or two weeks.

Hobman's team is developing diagnostic tools and antiviral therapies that can be used against Zika, and will be collaborating with researchers on the front lines in South America and the Caribbean.

This is the second time Hobman's team has received funding for Zika research — last July, they were awarded one million dollars over five years for related studies.

Ansalem said they've already made strong progress on understanding the cell types that support the virus.

"Some of the cell types we identified are very important for brain development in the babies and also, for example, development of sperm within

the testes," he said.

The current outbreak of Zika virus began in 2014 in South America and has since spread to the Gulf Coast of the U.S.

In pregnant women it can lead to microcephaly, a sometimes fatal congenital condition associated with incomplete brain development in newborns.

\$500K

University of Alberta professor Tom Hobman is among the Canadian scientists getting a Canadian Institutes of Health Research grant of \$500,000 to study the mosquito-borne Zika virus.

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Reconciliation: Year three

MOVEMENT

March 30 event at city hall to see how far we've come



Matt Kieltyka
Metro | Edmonton

Canada's 150th anniversary is the perfect time to see how Edmonton has evolved three years after the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, according to one advocate.

Miranda Jimmy, co-founder of Reconciliation and Solidarity Edmonton (RISE), is organizing a day full of reconciliation-themed events at city hall March 30th to mark the third anniversary of the commission making 94 calls to action.

"It's a moment to stop and reflect on what's happened in those last three years and also how far we still need to go," Jimmy told Metro. "I think in this particular year of Canada 150, we have an opportunity to soberly reflect on who we are as Canadians, to honour our first peoples and



Miranda Jimmy, ward 5 contestant and program manager with Edmonton Heritage Council. JEREMY SIMES/METRO

make sure our country actually is welcoming and inclusive of everyone who lives here."

Jimmy said the commission has helped Canadians understand the legacy of residential schools on Indigenous people and the social issues that have plagued First Nations as a result.

But the real progress is harder

to gauge. "That kind of raised awareness is important," she said, "but as far as concrete actions, I think we have a long ways to go. The calls to action are monumental change required at all levels of Canadian society. I can't say that there are a bunch of checkmarks saying 'done' because the change is so huge."

On a local level, Jimmy (who is running for council in the next election) credits the City of Edmonton for giving employees training on Indigenous issues even before the commission made that one of its calls to action.

However, she said \$200,000 committed to reconciliation in

2014 has still gone unused by council.

The March 30 event will feature an expert panel on progress to date, the launch of a reconciliation book club featuring the memoir *My Decade at Old Sun, My Lifetime of Hell* by Arthur Bear Chief, and cultural programming.

BANFF NATIONAL PARK

The more transit to parks the better



Helen Pike
Metro | Calgary

As the newly launched On-It transit buses sit idle over the weekend, the Calgary Regional Partnership is looking to the mountains to expand their service this summer.

The board has already voted in favour of launching a service to get people from the city to Banff on weekends at a revenue-neutral model for 10 to 12 weeks.

"It's just kind of at a conceptual stage," said Ettore Iannacito to Regional Transit Program Manager. "If it does work out we still have the ability to continue the service on weekends — maybe there's demand in the winter time for ski trips."

He acknowledged that there are other services online today that bus citizens, and tourists to the nearby national park, but said their service is always meant as a complement to what's already out there.

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Province absolved in deaths of 2 boys

COURT

The judge found their father solely responsible

An inquiry judge makes no recommendations in a report that says Alberta Children's Services cannot be blamed in the deaths of two young boys.

Judge Raymond Bodnarek says Jason Cardinal was solely responsible for the murder of his sons Caleb and Gabriel in December 2010.

Caleb, who was six, and three-year-old Gabriel were drugged and strangled during a court-authorized visit with their father in Edmonton.

Cardinal pleaded guilty to first-degree murder and is serving a life sentence with no parole for 25 years. Bodnarek notes that Cardinal admitted he plotted the murders even before there was a court hearing to determine who should get cus-

tody of the boys.

The hearing wasn't finished and had been adjourned for several months, so the boys remained living with their mother, Andrea Badger.



I find that Children's Services made reasonable professional judgment calls.

Judge Raymond Bodnarek

"After carefully considering all of the evidence, I find that their deaths were not caused by flaws in the system," Bodnarek said in the public inquiry report released Thursday.

"I find that (Children's Services) made reasonable professional judgment calls throughout their involvement with Caleb and Gabriel. These judgment calls were made with ... infor-

mation including opinions from mental-health professionals."

The judge's report focuses on a one-year legal battle that started in January 2010 between Cardinal and Badger. The mother had become concerned that the two boys and her older daughter from a previous relationship were in danger due to Cardinal's mental health.

Children's Services had first become involved with Caleb and Gabriel in May 2009. The children were placed in Badger's care the following March and Cardinal was granted access with supervision.

By the end of that summer, Cardinal was allowed to spend time with his sons on unsupervised weekend visits subject to random checks by a family reunification worker.

Bodnarek said Cardinal's behaviour began to worsen in the fall. He was caught obtaining prescription drugs fraudulently, was banned from a doctor's office for seeking drugs and charged with shoplifting.

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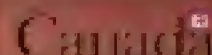
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EVENTS

Colony of endangered bats found

WILDLIFE

Researchers make surprise discovery in boreal forest



Matt Kieltyka
Metro | Edmonton

Researchers in Alberta have stumbled on a large population of endangered bats in the boreal forest that could be critical for conservation efforts.

White nose syndrome has wreaked havoc on bat populations in the eastern U.S. and Canada (mortality rates are as high as 95 per cent) and was discovered in Washington state for the first time last year.

Biologists fear it's just a matter of time before the deadly fungus reaches Alberta's bats.

So finding a cluster of more than 200 Little Brown Myotis bats in a newly explored area of the northern forest, far from their usual hibernation site in the Rocky Mountains, was a big deal for the Wildlife Conservation Society Canada (WCS) and Alberta Environment and Parks



Wildlife biologist Dave Hobson said monitoring bat populations is key for conservation. COURTESY

scientists.

"Because of white nose syndrome coming into the States and Canada, we're trying to get a handle on where our bats are. We can't protect them if we don't know where they are," said Dave Critchley, the Alberta

co-ordinator of WCS's BatCaver program.

"If you think about caves and where they typically are, it's usually the mountains, especially any that have bats currently. So seeing this in the spruce-covered forest, wow, that's a totally different expectation."

ferent expectation."

In fact, the undisclosed cave (its location is being withheld to protect the bats) is now the third largest known hibernation site for this species of bats in the entire province.

Critchley said researchers

only know where about 10 per cent of bats go to hibernate in the winter, so discovering new clusters can help scientists monitor conditions, get a better sense of their population and watch out for signs of white nose syndrome.

A healthy bat population is vital for pest control, said Alberta Environment and Parks senior wildlife biologist Dave Hobson.

"Bats have an important role to play in the environment," he said.

Hobson said there isn't much the government can do about white nose syndrome, so monitoring bat populations is key.

"The only thing we can do to slow its spread is to prevent human visitation to these caves or make sure those people have clean equipment and clothing," he said.

The fungus kills by waking bats from their hibernation early, before there are any insects out for them to eat. Human disturbance can have a similar effect.

"It's estimated that a single arousal event uses up to 60 days worth of stored energy," he said. "We won't want people to start going to these caves in the winter and disturbing these bats."

FORT MCMURRAY

Fire at oilsands facility put out

A fire at a Syncrude oilsands facility in northern Alberta has been extinguished, two days after it broke out.

The company says it is still investigating the cause of the fire, which started in an oil supply line at the Mildred Lake upgrader.

Crews allowed the fire to continue to burn in order to safely dispose of chemicals left in the line.

Officials including those with Alberta Occupational Health and Safety remain on site to investigate.

Syncrude says an employee who was injured in the fire remains in stable condition in an Edmonton hospital.

It says several upgrader units remain shut down or are working at reduced rates and operations have been scaled back. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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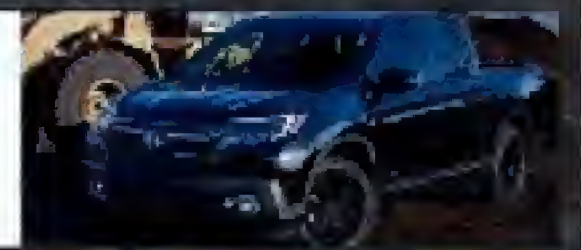
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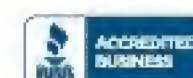
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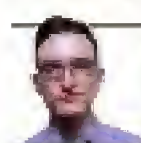


Todd Houseman, left, and Ben Gorodetsky make up improv duo Folk Lordz. CONTRIBUTED/CURTIS COMEAU

Stories on the Hill returns

ARTS AND CULTURE

Event showcases Indigenous artists and storytellers



Kevin Maimann
Metro | Edmonton

Fort Edmonton Park will house a diverse lineup of Indigenous artists and storytellers this weekend as Stories on the Hill returns to Capitol Theatre.

The event launched in 2016 to a sold-out crowd with five performances in one night. This year, it's grown to three days and 18 acts covering dancing, improv, poetry, film and music.

"It's about Indigenizing the arts scene, which is sort of an act of decolonization," said Todd Houseman, who makes up one half of the improv duo Folk Lordz with Ben Gorodetsky.

Folk Lordz produces Stories on the Hill and will also perform Saturday.

"When we think of decolonization, I think a lot of people's assumption is that

that means removing the colony — which is not really possible at this point, you cannot remove the colony, it's fully integrated into this land. But Indigenizing means inserting in place of colonial narratives, the indigenous narrative," Houseman continued.

"So, reinserting it back into the mainstream media."

Folk Lordz launched through Rapid Fire Theatre three years ago and since, the improv group has toured across North America, touting a brand of physical comedy that draws heavily on each member's respective storytelling ancestors.

"It's one part Russian Jewish narrative, one part a plains Cree narrative, and one part whatever the audience wants," Houseman said.

Other performers this weekend will include Inuit storyteller Jenna Broomfield, filmmaker Coty Savard and blues-rock band Injun Josephine.

This year's event also features a new showcase of emerging youth talent on Thursday.

Shows run Friday and Saturday at 7:30 p.m. in Capitol Theatre.

“It’s one part Russian Jewish narrative, one part a plains Cree narrative, and one part whatever the audience wants.”

Todd Houseman, Folk Lordz

WEEKEND EVENTS

What's on in Edmonton this weekend

FRIDAY

What: Metal legends Black Sabbath bowed out this year after their final reunion tour, but don't worry if you missed them — the Cancer Bats have you covered. The Ontario act is touring as a Black Sabbath cover band, turning up the maximum sludge for their takes on all the classics.

When: 7 p.m.

Where: The Needle Vinyl Tavern, 10524 Jasper Ave.

SATURDAY

What: Speakers representing various faiths, including Islam, Judaism, Christianity and more, will share their perspectives on religious freedom and participate in a moderated panel discussion at the event, Religious Freedom: A Community Conversation.

When: 1-5 p.m.

Where: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 9010 85 St.

ALL WEEKEND

What: MadFandango Theatre Collective presents the North American premiere of The Believers, a play which follows a couple offering refuge to a neighbouring family during a bad storm, and the secrets and beliefs that come out once alcohol enters the equation. The production is part of the Roxy Performance Series.

When: Daily 8-9:30 p.m.

Where: Roxy on Gateway, 8529 Gateway Blvd.

ALL WEEKEND

What: BarnRaise Edmonton is a two-day maker conference tackling social issues through design. This year's challenge is improving early childhood development in alignment with the 2015 End Poverty Edmonton Strategy. Participants will hear from leading experts in the field of design and social innovation.

When: Friday through Sunday

Where: Robbins Health Learning Centre, 10910 104 Ave.



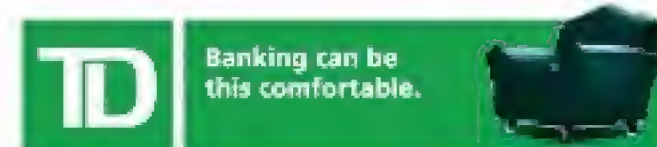
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Charges 'politically motivated': Lawyer



Karim Baratov was arrested as a suspect in a massive hack of Yahoo emails. INSTAGRAM

LEGAL

Karim Baratov is maintaining his innocence

A lawyer for a Canadian man of Kazakh origins arrested as one of four suspects in a massive hack of Yahoo emails said Thursday that the charges against his client may be "politically motivated by the U.S."

Jag Virk suggested that his client, 22-year-old Karim Baratov, is being used as a scapegoat by American authorities.

"I believe (U.S. President) Donald Trump is using this to make it appear as if he is going after Russian hackers," he said. "These allegations are from three years ago."

Baratov maintains his innocence and has no prior criminal record, his lawyer said, adding that people should wait for all

facts to emerge in the case.

Toronto police said Baratov was arrested Tuesday in the Ontario community of Ancaster at the request of American authorities.

The U.S. Department of Justice said a grand jury in California has indicted Baratov and three others, two of them allegedly officers of the Russian Federal Security Service, for computer hacking, economic espionage and other criminal

offences.

U.S. officials said Baratov also went by the names Kay, Karim Taloverov and Karim Akehmek Tokbergenov.

He was arrested under the extradition act, and appeared in court in Hamilton on Wednesday morning, court staff said. His case was put over until Friday afternoon, when he was expected to appear by video.

An acquaintance described Baratov as an exotic car buff

who was popular and flashy but tight-lipped about his personal life — including his job, which involved working with computers.

Also indicted in the alleged conspiracy that authorities said began in January 2014 were Dmitry Aleksandrovich Dokuchaev, 33, Igor Anatolyevich Sushchin, 43, and Alexsey Alexseyevich (Magg) Belan, 29, all Russian nationals and residents. THE CANADIAN PRESS

HYGIENE

Michael Chong a poster boy for Guatemala

No one is quite sure just how it happened, but Conservative MP Michael Chong has somehow become the poster boy — literally — for a top-quality, "hygienic" experience in Guatemalan washrooms.

Chong's bright smile was spotted on a poster Thursday just outside a washroom in the Central American country, with his arms folded, hair neatly combed and wearing a business suit.

The poster advertises "a special service for special people like you" in Spanish text. That special service is spelled out below:

"sanitary" and "hygienic" bathroom facilities.

The poster was spotted by a visiting Canadian, Bailey Greenspon, who tweeted a photo of it. "Michael Chong, your stock photo is reassuring public wash-room users in Guatemala," Greenspon tweeted.

Chong responded with tongue firmly in cheek. "Just part of the Chong campaign's international outreach in Latin America," the leadership hopeful tweeted in reply, adding the hashtag, "#chongtourage" to the end of his post.

Chisholm Pothier, communications director for Chong's leadership campaign, said he doesn't know for sure how Chong ended up being the face of toilet breaks in Guatemala, but it could be because the photos on Chong's website were at one point open for use.

Chong has been a model for nature's call in Guatemala since at least 2015, when another Canadian, Tim McIntosh, said he saw the politician's face on a poster there.

"He actually looks really good," Pothier said. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE



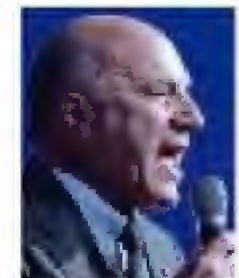
Bailey Greenspon and a poster of Michael Chong. CONTRIBUTED

POLITICS

O'Leary claims the Tory leadership race is 'rigged'

Federal Conservative leadership hopeful Kevin O'Leary's campaign is making allegations of what it calls "fraud" and "widespread vote rigging" in the race.

The celebrity businessman's campaign issued a statement Thursday accusing "campaign activists" of using untraceable prepaid credit cards to sign up fake members. The statement says that would violate federal election and campaign financing laws, adding O'Leary's



Kevin O'Leary

campaign has complained to the party.

His campaign speculates some of those who have been signed up might not even know they're members.

A Conservative party spokesman says the party is looking into O'Leary's accusations.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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A new kind of diplomacy

POLITICS

Justin Trudeau trying to get an in with Trump through Ivanka

A businesswoman whose lifestyle brand is struggling with liberals. A liberal-multilateralist prime minister who needs an in with a conservative-nationalist president.

Diplomacy is rooted in interests. And Ivanka Trump and Justin Trudeau both have an interest in hanging out with each other.

The prime minister sat with the president's daughter Wednesday night at the Broadway musical *Come From Away*, the Canadian show about the Newfoundland town that took in stranded Americans on Sept. 11, 2001. It was his second olive branch to her in just over a month.

Some U.S. news outlets suggested Trudeau had been sending a kind of passive-aggressive message: "Justin Trudeau brought Ivanka Trump to a Broadway show that celebrates generosity towards foreigners in need," the *New York Times* tweeted. Whether or not that was true, he was also offering a kind of cashless donation to her company.

Trudeau joked of his "bromance" with former president Barack Obama. Shared youth and mutual interest in women's issues notwithstanding, his new bestiehood appears much more



Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's budding friendship with Ivanka Trump appears to be a way to get an in with her father, the president of the U.S. INSTAGRAM/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

a marriage of convenience.

"It is just so *Game of Thrones*," said John Higginbotham, a former Canadian diplomat in Washington, referring to the television show in which warring family dynasties strike strategic alliances in ruthless pursuit of power.

Like Donald Trump before her, Ivanka Trump has made a brand out of her name. Her name has been tarnished, in the eyes of millions of progressive American consumers, by her father's xenophobia and sexism. Who better to be seen with than the fashionable foreign progressive feminist who hugs refugees?

For Trudeau, daughter diplomacy offers the prospect of a

lifeline to a president who shares almost none of his principles but who often appears to value personal relationships over ideology and policy — and who appreciates a political gift. Donald Trump has lavished praise upon chief executives who have let him take undeserved credit for their investments.

"It looks as if foreign leaders think the way to approach Trump is by direct or indirect appeals to his ego and personality, rather than in terms of national interests," said Charles Stevenson, a former State Department policy planner who teaches foreign policy at Johns Hopkins University. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Defence, security are winners in the Trump budget, but many others lose

Military spending would get the biggest boost in President Donald Trump's proposed budget. Environmental programs, medical research, Amtrak and an array of international and cultural programs would take big hits.

The budget proposal out Thursday is a White House wish list; it'll be up to Congress to decide where money goes. If Trump gets his way, there will be more losers than winners among government departments and programs. Here is a sampling:

WINNERS

■ The Pentagon. Trump proposes a 10 per cent increase in the massive defence budget, with an extra \$52 billion going to accelerate the war against the Islamic State group and address insufficient weapons stocks, per-

sonnel gaps, deferred maintenance and cyber vulnerabilities.

■ Veterans Affairs. Up 5.9 per cent. That's an additional \$4.4 billion, driven by ever-growing health care costs. The plan would allocate \$3.5 billion to extend an expiring Veterans Choice program.

■ Homeland Security. Up 6.8 per cent. That's \$2.8 billion more. Most of the increase, \$2.6 billion, would be to help kick-start Trump's promised border wall. The president has repeatedly said Mexico would pay for the wall; Mexican officials are adamant that they won't.

■ School choice: \$1.4 billion more to expand school choice programs, bringing spending in that area to \$20 billion, even as the Education Department's overall budget would be cut by

\$9 billion, or 13 per cent.

LOSERS:

■ EPA, facing a 31.4 per cent cut, or \$2.6 billion. The plan would cut 3,200 jobs at the agency, eliminate a new plan for tighter regulations on power plants, and "zero out" programs to clean up the Great Lakes and the Chesapeake Bay. EPA climate change research would be eliminated. Grants for state and local drinking and wastewater projects would be preserved.

■ Health and Human Services, facing a \$12.6 billion cut, or 16.2 per cent. The plan would cut \$5.8 billion from the nearly \$32 billion National Institutes of Health, the nation's premier medical research agency, bringing its total to \$25.9 billion.

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Acclimatizing to violence

In New Orleans, what's shocking isn't the sound of gunfire, but how quickly it becomes quotidian

ROSEMARY WESTWOOD
From the U.S.



A young man stood outside a pharmacy on a busy New Orleans street this week, selling CDs of his music for \$5 a disc.

This isn't unusual here; I've seen young men (not so much women) sell music and paintings outside pharmacies and gas stations. My sister, visiting from Vancouver, bought the CD, and listening to it while driving around, we heard him rap about people he's lost.

He seemed young, maybe not even out of his teens, and the people he wished he could "talk for a minute" with were only 20 or 22. It's not explicit what they were lost to, but this is New Orleans, and it's a safe bet guns were involved.

The city got off to a violent start in 2017. In just the first month of the year, 75 people

were hurt or killed by gunshots, a 50-per-cent jump over 2016, which was an usually violent year in its own right. Last year, 604 guns were reported stolen — up 19 per cent from 2015 — in a trend that police say fuels street violence and arms gangs.

In a way totally foreign to a Canadian, the normalcy of life here exists atop the knowledge that guns are everywhere. Road rage encounters not infrequently turn to shootings. Sitting in my living room, I've heard shots a handful of times. It only took a few months before that fact stopped surprising me, and I play the same game as my neighbours: gunshot or fireworks?

The news headlines become routine. A man was shot in an apartment complex in the city's east end on Sunday. Two men and a woman were killed (and another

woman injured by a shot to the head) in the Metairie suburb on Wednesday. Last week, a 30-year-old mother and her six-year-old and 10-year-old sons were all shot dead.

In a recent piece for NPR, a reporter noted how mundane all this violence has become, how people absorb it into their daily lives as fact, endure it like the weather.

But it's not exactly that simple. Gun violence is both mundane and an omnipresent threat. It's a psychological underpinning to otherwise innocuous decisions you might make, such as what street to walk down, or whether to flip the bird to another driver. And that's coming from a white ex-pat woman, in a city where 70 per cent of those killed by guns are black men, according to a recent report in the Gambit newspaper. The same report found that my neighbourhood, a

predominately black one, is part of a district disproportionately violent compared to other whiter, more affluent parts of town — just one of the myriad ways black New Orleanians face a drastically different life than their white counterparts.

With U.S. President Donald Trump's crusade against "inner cities," the long-debunked "law and order" approach is reigning again in Washington, even though we know that violence is learned, that offenders have often been victims and ending the cycle requires dramatic improvements to health, education, employment and safety. But perhaps the most frustrating fact is just how easy it is to drop into a city so emblematic of this country's racial inequality and extraordinary gun violence, and feel the current of acceptance pull you in, even just a little.

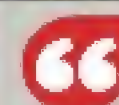
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ROBERT AND DARLENE



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Each day until July 1, Metro will feature one reader's postcard in our editions across the country, on Metronews.ca and our 150postcards Instagram page. Get involved by sending us a photo of your favourite place in Canada along with 25 to 50 words about why that place is special to you. Email us at scene@metronews.ca or post to Instagram or Twitter with the hashtag #150postcards.

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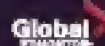
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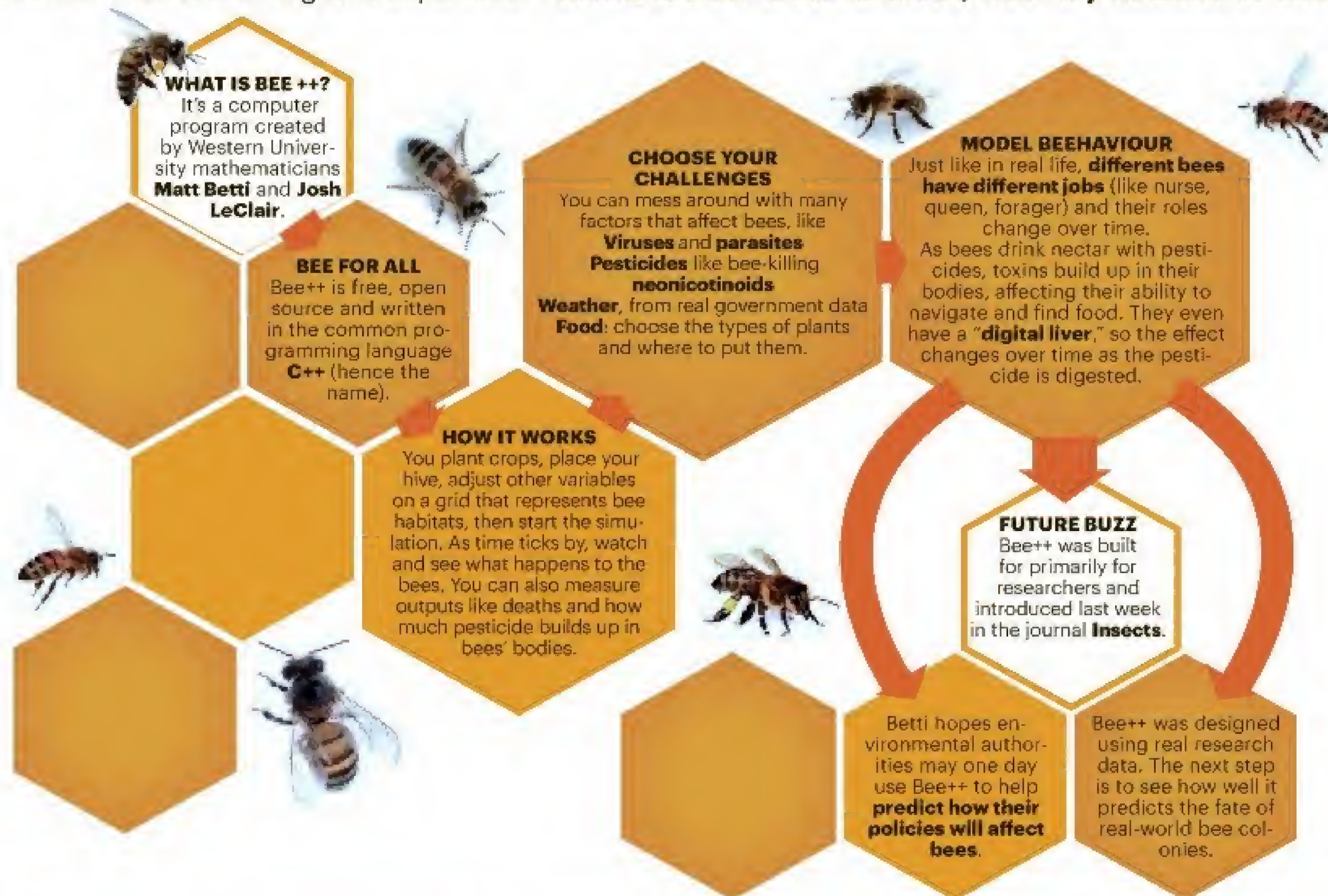
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DECODED by Genna Buck and Andrés Plana

ON A WING AND A GAME PLAYER

Honeybees are in trouble. For years, they've been plagued with Colony Collapse Disorder, a strange syndrome killing masses of bees. Why? It's a complicated combo of pesticides, parasites and other factors. For the future of our food supply and economy, we must protect pollinators. But studying them is time-consuming and expensive. **Thanks to a some clever math, that may be about to change.**



FINDINGS Your week in science



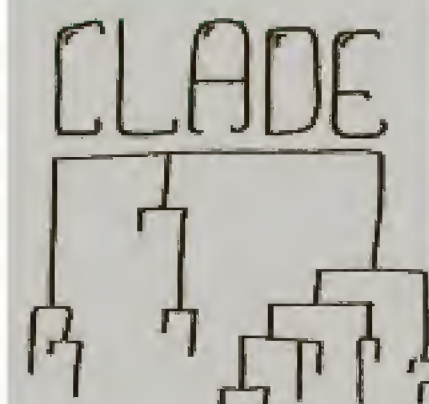
STRETCHING SCREENS

Using simple silicon and gel, UBC scientists made a touchscreen that can sense pressure, motion or a hovering finger, even when it's folded or bent. One day, you might be able to just fold out your phone into a tablet.

POWER UP

Speaking of smartphones, Disney has built a prototype "charging room" with a copper pole and aluminum walls that can charge 10 batteries at once — wirelessly. It's safe for people to enter, the company says, and it sounds like something that could come in handy in the future Magic Kingdom.

SOUND SMART



DEFINITION

In evolution, a **clade** is a group of living things including a common ancestor and all its direct descendants. It's one branch on the tree of life.

USE IT IN A SENTENCE

My great-grandmother, my grandma, my mom and me are one big happy **clade**.



CITIZEN SCIENTIST by Genna Buck

Play on, kids. Slime isn't going to kill you.

The Great Slime Panic of 2017. If you have school-age kids, you know what I'm talking about.

Mania for slime — a bouncy, stretchy concoction of water, craft glue, food colouring and borax — is sweeping social media.

But Health Canada recently recommended against using borax in children's arts and crafts, citing possible "developmental and reproductive health effects."

As a rule, I trust Health Canada's scientific expertise com-

pletely. But something about this dictum didn't sit right with me.

Canadians have been using borax, a powdery white mineral, as a household detergent for more than a century. And small, harmless amounts of boron, its elemental form, naturally occur in fruits, vegetables and drinking water.

Borax can irritate skin and eyes, and you definitely shouldn't eat it, but could playing with goo really harm your child's future reproductive health? And why is the gov-

ernment suddenly concerned about it?

The second question is easier. Health Canada has launched a long-term project evaluating the safety of chemicals used for a long time, but perhaps not scrutinized enough back in the day.

For insight into the first question, I asked medical toxicologist Dr. Andrew Stolbach.

The highlights: Long-term exposure to high doses of boron is linked to testicular abnormalities in dogs and rats. These studies are small and mostly more than

20 years old.

There are a few small studies of people exposed to high levels of boron for years, which showed slightly elevated rates of fertility problems and miscarriage. But the difference was not significant.

Bottom line: he's fine with his five-year-old daughter playing with borax slime now and then.

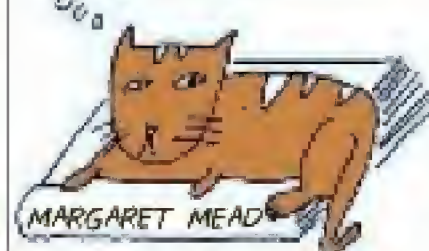
"To me, it's a very, very small risk. And it's a theoretical risk."

Science Question?

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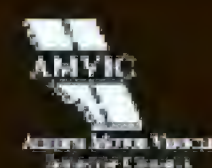
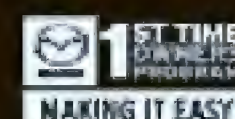
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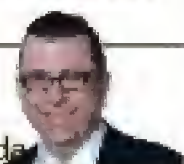
Tale's real beauty is humanity

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST

Director Bill Condon takes cue from 1946 version of film

Richard Crouse

For Metro Canada



Poet Paul Éluard said that to understand Jean Cocteau's 1946 version of *La Belle et la Bête* — *Beauty and the Beast* — you must love your dog more than your car. His comment is baffling only if you haven't seen the movie.

Once Cocteau's film is seen, it's apparent that what makes his version rewarding is that it values the organic over the mechanical — even the special effects are handmade. It refuses to allow the technical aspects of the film to interfere with the humanity of the story.

This weekend Disney will have their collective fingers crossed that audiences will favour their poodles over their RVs as they release the big-budget, live-action version of *Beauty and the Beast* starring Emma Watson.

Director Bill Condon says the animated 1991 Disney classic was an inspiration for the new film, but adds he also drew from everything from *Twilight* and *Frankenstein* to a 1932 musical comedy called *Love Me Tonight* when creating the look for the new movie.

He also mentions *La Belle et la Bête*. "A film I really love." His take on the Beast looked back to the movie, cribbing the character's combination of ferocity and romance from Cocteau.

Before taking in the new version this weekend, let's have a look back at the lit-



Bill Condon took inspiration from a variety of films, including Jean Cocteau's *La Belle et la Bête*. CONTRIBUTED

tle-seen 70-year old Cocteau classic.

Loosely based on the timeless Jeanne-Marie Leprince de Beaumont fairy tale, the action in *La Belle et la Bête* begins when a poverty-stricken merchant pilfers a rose from a grand estate owned by a strange creature. The Beast strikes a deal with the man.

He'll spare the life of the merchant in return for the hand of one of the man's daughters. Reluctantly the merchant offers Belle, a beautiful girl who had been courted by the oafish Avenant.

At first she is repulsed by

MOVIE RATINGS by Richard Crouse

Beauty and the Beast ★★★
T2 Trainspotting ★★★★★
Goon: Last of the Enforcers ★★★
The Sense of an Ending ★★★★★
Weirdos ★★★★★

★★★
 ★★★★★
 ★★★
 ★★★★★
 ★★★★★

HOW RATING WORKS
 ★★★★★ SEE IT
 ★★★ WORTHWHILE
 ★★ UP TO YOU
 ★ SKIP IT

the Beast, who looks like the love child of the Wolf Man and Mrs. Chewbacca, but over time his tender ways and nightly offers of marriage warm her heart and she learns to love him for his inner beauty.

Cocteau's version strays from the original story and

Condon's adaptation with the addition of a subplot involving Avenant's scheme to kill the Beast and make off with his treasures and an unexpected magical personality switcheroo.

It's meant to be a happy ending, but not everyone loved

the new coda. When Marlene Dietrich saw an early cut of the film at a private screening, she squeezed Cocteau's hand and said, "Where is my beautiful Beast?"

Other audiences embraced Cocteau's vision. In his diary the poet wrote of a test screening held for the technicians in the Joinville Studio where the film had been made. "The welcome the picture received from that audience of workers was unforgettable," he wrote.

Others criticized *La Belle et la Bête* for its straightforwardness, complaining that the characters are simply drawn,

the story one dimensional. Taking that view, however, misses Cocteau's point.

At the beginning of the film he asks for "childlike simplicity," inviting the viewer to connect with their inner child, eschew cynicism and embrace naïveté for the film's 96-minute running time.

In 1946 the request was meant as a salve for a post-occupation France that was still dealing with the aftermath of a terrible war.

Today, in an increasingly contemptuous world, the message still seems timely and welcome.

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INTERVIEW

Long-awaited Trainspotting sequel zeroes in on age issues

As with any long-delayed family reunion, nobody was expecting the sequel to Trainspotting to be a piece of cake, or even a gob of heroin.

Least of all director Danny Boyle and star Ewan McGregor, whose friendship came apart over the casting for Boyle's 2000 terror-in-paradise film *The Beach*, in which Leonardo DiCaprio got the lead gig. McGregor felt Boyle had promised him.

McGregor and Boyle didn't speak for most of the two decades since *Trainspotting*, a bleak satire about Edinburgh heroin addicts that became Britain's smack-infused answer to the 1990s indie-film revolution spearheaded by the likes of America's Quentin Tarantino and Steven Soderbergh. But now the sequel *T2 Trainspotting* is almost upon us.

"Ewan and I fell out over *The Beach*, and it was my fault, and we reconciled about three or four years ago," Boyle, 60, says from Australia, one stop on a worldwide promotional tour.

"So by the time we were working on this seriously, when this script arrived two years ago, we were on good terms and I knew he'd do it. It was wonderful to work with him again. I've missed him, really."

But getting McGregor, 45, to reprise his Mark Renton character — now older but not wiser, and in even bigger trouble than before — was just one of many hurdles to overcome on the sequel path. Boyle also had to round up other key members of the *Trainspotting* cast: flash Sick Boy (Jonny Lee Miller), psycho Begbie (Robert Carlyle) and sad Spud (Ewen Bremner). He also found room in the film for a cameo by Renton's ex-girlfriend Diane (Kelly Macdonald), while greatly expanding the female quotient with wily new character Veronika (Anjela Nedyalkova).

Then there was the small matter of the script, which returning screenwriter John Hodge adapted from two novels by Scottish author



Sick Boy (Jonny Lee Miller), Mark Renton (Ewan McGregor) and Spud (Ewen Bremner) are struggling with the transition into adulthood in *Trainspotting* sequel *T2*. CONTRIBUTED

Irvine Welsh, the original *Trainspotting* and its follow-up *Porno*.

The story had to be something the Manchester-born filmmaker really wanted to do, because his career has been noteworthy for its never-look-back variety of stories and genres. In the 23 years since his feature debut with the black comedy *Shallow Grave*, which also starred McGregor,

he's successfully tackled horror (*28 Days Later*), science fiction (*Sunshine*), family comedy (*Millions*), Bollywood-style

romance (Oscar winner *Slumdog Millionaire*) and real-life survival drama (*127 Hours*), among other pursuits.



I knew he'd do it. It was wonderful to work with him again. I've missed him, really.

Danny Boyle, on Ewan McGregor

There were multiple attempts at a *T2* script until Boyle got one he was satisfied with.

"We did do quite a few. We had a couple of false starts 10 years ago, which were terrible. They were complete traditional sequels: different plot, same characters. Kind of the same thing again with a different engine, or with different mechanics."

"There was no greater sense of the characters coming together again, other than obviously the trigger to Renton returning. I remember thinking they're not good enough, and we'll never make this. The actors will never agree to do it; I'm not even going to send it to them."

He finally got a script that he and the actors liked, and shooting commenced. But when he was editing the film in post-production, he noticed something he hadn't before: how much the children in the middle-aged lives of Renton, Spud, Sick Boy and Begbie were affecting the tone of the film. All these guys are now struggling to Choose Life not just for themselves, but also for the children they've fathered, and not in ideal circumstances.

Boyle also realized that *T2* had to be much less of a drug-infused movie that *Trainspotting* was — although there are a lot of hilarious callbacks to the original — and to concentrate more of the boys-to-men struggle of the protagonists.

"What we decided in the end, in editing, is that it was really about what had happened to these men over time. We thought the film was about time (the 20 years past), and then we realized it was about masculine behaviour over time. It's about what happens to men as they age very badly."

But all of the actors playing them have aged delightfully. *T2* may have been a difficult family reunion to pull off, but it's turned out to be a happy one.

"They've changed, though, all of them. Including Ewan, because he's directed a movie now (*American Pastoral*), and Bobby has also directed a movie (*Barney Thomson*)... they now know so much about filmmaking, whereas I remember, the first time, how little they knew about filmmaking, just as I did my first time."

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

NEW RELEASES

After The Storm

Typhoons rage across Japan in Hirokazu Kore-eda's bittersweet *After the Storm*, but they're nothing compared to the personal tempests of his male protagonist Ryota (Hiroshi Abe).

Winner of a major literary prize 15 years ago for his debut novel, prophetically titled *The Empty Table*, Ryota, a former wunderkind author, has sunk into despondent middle age. His father and wife recently left him, one through death and the other through marital collapse. When Ryota describes himself to mama as a "great-talents-bloom-late type," she gently scolds, "You're taking too long to bloom." Kore-eda's life messages are imparted with the lightest of touches. The rage inside his lens comes only from the weather.

The Lure

Here's a wild logline for you: Two hungry, horny and topless vampire mermaids form a pop band and run wild on dry land. Too bad the shipwreck of a screenplay can't keep up with the visuals, which are pretty great — the film won a jury prize for "unique vision and design" at Sundance. The film by Poland's Agnieszka Smoczyńska stars Marta Mazurek and Michalina Olszanska as mermaid sisters Srebrna and Złota, who leave their watery domain to become nightclub singers. They also snack on a few patrons — although trouble really starts when love abruptly intrudes.

The Sense of an Ending

Memory is a tricky thing and sometimes what we thought we knew turns out to be not quite the case. Such as the ways life unfolds for an aging Englishman as the past intrudes into the present. Director Ritesh Batra adapts the Man Booker Prize-winning novel into a contemplative but compelling tale about regret, remorse and redemption. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

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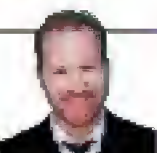
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Maritimes' prodigal son stays home

INTERVIEW

Allan Hawco's love for native turf breeding much success

Steve Gow
For Metro Canada



It's the day after the Canadian Screen Awards and Allan Hawco missed out on the whole affair. Grounded in Newfoundland after a treacherous windstorm left tens of thousands without electricity, the actor resigned to watch his latest film *Weirdos* pick up two CSAs from afar. But he actually didn't mind that much.

"I don't like leaving the province," laughed the 39-year-old thespian a day later. "I was bummed that I wasn't there with all my friends last night but there was a part of me that didn't mind staying a little bit later in St. John's."

Raised on *The Rock*, Hawco is truly one of the Maritimes' prodigal sons. Not only does he still make Newfoundland



Allan Hawco in *Weirdos*, the film about a teenager living in a small town in Nova Scotia in 1976 who decides to run away to live with his mother. CONTRIBUTED

his home, but it's where the actor-producer decided to film his former six-season television hit drama *Republic of Doyle* and his new historical Netflix fur-trade series *Frontier*.

"I just kind of grew up with this severe love for Newfoundland — it's weird," explained

Hawco. "I wanted more than anything in my life to produce and create television and film there and work and live there. I've wanted that far more than I might have, in my younger years, to be a Hollywood celebrity."

As such, Hawco is proving an

intriguing personality in Canadian entertainment. By shunning the alluring spotlight of Tinseltown to achieve success north of the border, he's arguably inspiring other ambitious actors averse to the seductive pull of American showbiz.

In Hawco's case, it's also

landed him a small-but-satisfying paternal part in *Weirdos* (in theatres today) where he mingled with fellow-minded flag-wavers like iconic director Bruce McDonald (*Highway 61*, *Trigger*) and celebrated scribe Daniel MacIvor.

"He's been a mentor to me over the years," admitted Hawco of the Cape Breton playwright and his Canadian Screen Award-winning script about

two teens coming-of-age as they hitchhike across 1970's Nova Scotia.

"But another reason I wanted to do the movie is because of Bruce. There's people like them who have committed their lives to telling our stories and believe in it. There's a beautiful thing when you do that and people care — that's something that's hard to achieve and when it does work, it's very special."

BEHIND THE SCENES

Weirdos wins two

"(Daniel) was unprepared for the thought that he might win," said Allan Hawco of MacIvor's Canadian Screen Award for original screenplay. *Weirdos* also won the supporting actress for Molly Parker. "There's so many great films out there and the thought our little movie has made an impact — I'm pretty proud of that."

MacIvor's unique skill

"He has such insight to what we are as people," said Hawco of Daniel

MacIvor's award-winning script. "He's able to shine a certain light on it that I think is difficult at times (but) his whole body of work has got that with a light touch of humor."

Hollywood vs home

"If I could be married to both and disappear for a few months to do amazing work, that would be the ultimate dream," said Hawco of choosing a career in Canada over Hollywood. "I just don't like leaving the province."

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Mouse House undergoes some real-life renovation



Audra McDonald, who stars as Madame Garderobe in *Beauty and the Beast*, insists live-action remakes shouldn't upset the animation traditionalists. CONTRIBUTED

INTERVIEW

Beauty and the Beast sparks Disney's new era of remakes

Steve Gow
For Metro Canada



Disney is banking on the *Beauty and the Beast*.

After all, not only is it presumably the most expensive musical ever made, but it will also ring in a new era for the Mouse House — one in which the studio will focus on morphing live-action remakes from its own animated classics.

Of course, they began last year with *The Jungle Book* and *Cinderella* but this weekend's *Beauty and the Beast* officially initiates a new age of live-action adaptations that just may be leaving diehard Disney animation fans moping.

"Traditionalists might think that it means the thing they love so much is being erased but it's not and it's not being shunned in anyway," explained actress Audra McDonald, who portrays Madame Garderobe in this week-

end's remake of the 1991 animated blockbuster. "That film is absolutely perfect and no one denies that; Disney isn't trying to get rid of that — they're just exploring."

In fact, McDonald goes one step further, insisting that Disney's investment in reimagining old classics will only benefit fervent film-lovers. While immortal gems certainly have charm, there is a delightful difference in seeing iconic cartoons transformed.

"It just allows for subtler shading that can only be achieved with actual human beings," said the six-time Tony Award-winning thespian.

In fact, whether it's the endearing tale of a beauty that falls in love with a hideous beast or any other animated gem-turned-live action hit, the form of any fairy tale will only be as good as its story.

"This story touches the core in our humanity of wanting to be seen for who we are," said McDonald of what really makes the updated classic work. "No matter what generation we are in, what period of time we're living in, that's always going to be a deeply human thing and that's why I think it continues to resonate."

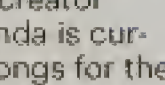
BONUS: 3 MORE REMAKES EN ROUTE

The Little Mermaid

Early in development, Hamilton-creator Lin-Manuel Miranda is currently shaping songs for the updated musical about a mermaid out of water.

Cruella

Fresh off her Oscar win for *La La Land*, Emma Stone will



next take on playing the villain from *101 Dalmations* in this origin story.

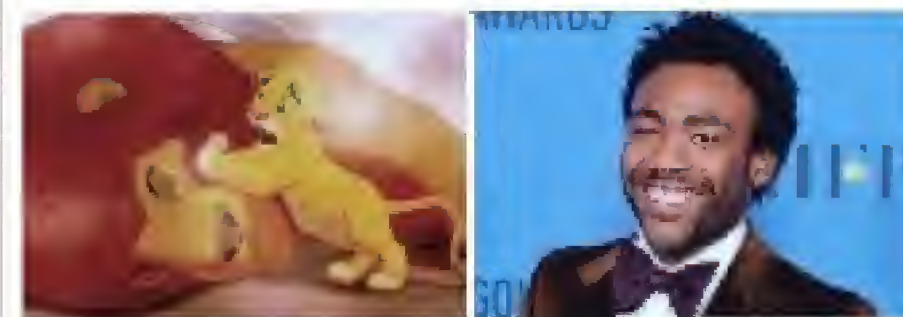
Aladdin

This 1992 genie gem gets a re-boot courtesy of Sherlock Holmes-helmer Guy Ritchie. The Oscar-winning musical begins its transformation when filming begins this summer.



Three favourites getting the live-action treatment

Disney has more than a dozen live-action reboots in the works. Here are three of the most-anticipated: STEVE GOW



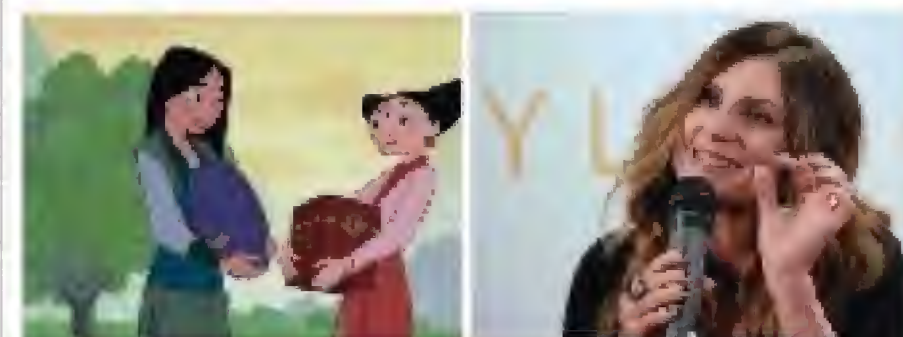
The Lion King (tbd)

This cherished lion-cub drama will be getting a real-life renovation at the hands of *Jungle Book*-director Jon Favreau, who has cast Donald Glover (TV's *Atlanta*) to play Simba while James Earl Jones will return to portray Mufasa, the same character he voiced in the 1994 hit.



Dumbo (May 2018)

It's been over 75 years since a big-eared elephant broke hearts on the big screen in this Disney classic. Now renowned filmmaker Tim Burton will rejuvenate the peppy pachyderm. However with a script being written by Ehren Kruger (*The Ring*), this *Dumbo* could be a little less straight-forward.



Mulan (November 2018)

Although little is known, this 1998 Disney favourite is definitely in the works with director Niki Caro (the upcoming *The Zookeeper's Wife*) in charge. A tale about one of China's greatest heroines, the studio has put out a casting call for an Asian lead after false rumours that Jennifer Lawrence was cast created an uproar with fans.

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Baruchel triples up for Goon sequel

SPORTS FLICKS

He acts, writes, directs hockey sequel with starry cast

With co-writer and cast member credit on *Goon: Last of the Enforcers*, Jay Baruchel also happens to be the hockey film's director — a role he likens to being a coach on a bench.

"I didn't put skates on once this movie," said the wise-cracking, Montreal-raised comedy star, who's brought an idiosyncratic charm to films including *Knocked Up*, *Tropic Thunder* and *This Is the End*.

"I needed to project confidence wherever possible. I had dozens of piss-and-vinegar 20-year-old men to boss around and I didn't need them to see me skating like an idiot."

The ardent Montreal Canadiens fan took the helm for *Goon: Last of the Enforcers* because the original film's director, Michael Dowse, was unavailable to make the sequel, which hits theatres Friday.

"It took some time because

we didn't make this movie for cynical reasons," said Baruchel, who now lives in Toronto. "I think a lot of times when you get a sequel inside of a year, it's because bean counters have dollar signs in their eyes."

"We didn't need to make this movie; we wanted to, though, and we wanted to make the movie that these characters and our fans deserve. We took it very seriously and anything important takes time."

Baruchel co-stars in both films as the foul-mouthed best friend to Seann William Scott's leading character, a sweet and simple-minded minor league hockey enforcer named Doug (The Thug) Glatt.

In the sequel, an injury forces Doug to leave the Halifax Islanders and find a job selling insurance. Alison Pill plays his pregnant wife, who patiently stands by his side as he tries to return to the team.

Other returning cast members include Liev Schreiber and Marc-Andre Grondin as players who also find themselves contemplating a life after the ice.

New cast members include Wyatt Russell as a villainous team captain and Elisha Cuthbert as the beer-chugging best friend to



Canadian actor Jay Baruchel had multiple roles in *Goon: Last of the Enforcers*. He has an acting role, directs the film, and wrote the sequel. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Pill's character.

Baruchel said he and Jesse Chabot wrote the sequel because they felt there was an appetite for a followup to the original, which earned \$4.1 million at Canadian theatres in 2012 — more than any other homegrown English-language feature film that year.

"It's not with every year *Goon* fades into the rear view. It's more surprisingly quite the opposite," said Baruchel, noting he's

met fans who've memorized the script and have tattoos of the characters.

The success of the first film is also partly what drew Scott back.

"Even the reviews were good, which never happens for me," quipped Scott, who played jock Steve Stifler in the *American Pie* franchise.

Baruchel aimed to make the filming of the sequel a collaborative process.

"I also wanted absolutely everyone on my set to feel that it was their sandbox," said Baruchel.

"Anybody could pitch me something and so there are moments in that movie that I didn't come up with."

The sequel has just as much — if not more — blood and brawls as the first.

Scott, who had never played hockey before *Goon*, said he and Russell didn't use stunt doubles for their brutal final fight.

"At the end of the fight we both look totally spent and that wasn't far from the truth," said Scott.

As a director, Baruchel was "a total natural," said Scott: "I've been lucky to work with a lot of really great comedy directors

and Jay is my favourite."

So, will Baruchel do another?

"Well, Doug is retired and it's not Rocky where he will retire and then come out of retirement four ... times," said Baruchel with a laugh, using an unprintable expletive.

"But I think we have such a deep world we've created populated by some pretty real and vivid characters that there is more story to tell, in our minds."

Scott said he's also on-board. But would he do another *American Pie* film?

"*American Death*," he quipped. "No, I actually think it would be really fun to see Stifler in his 40s just being the exact same. Or maybe it would be sad. I think we're done with them."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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'Good clothes open doors'

HOLLYWOOD FASHION

Paulson teams up with the hottest stylist in Hollywood

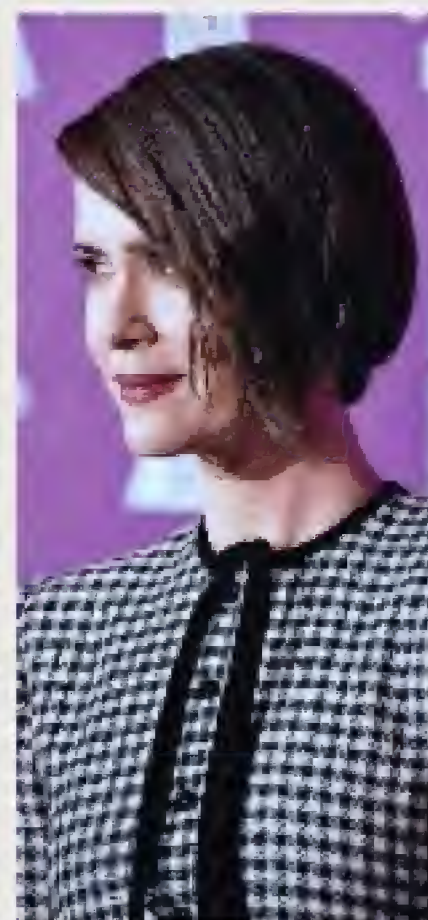
If Sarah Paulson didn't have a stylist, she would only wear sweatpants.

The silvery Marc Jacobs sheath she wore to the Golden Globes and the dazzling emerald dress she donned at the Emmys were picked out by a professional.

"My green Prada dress that I wore to the Emmys (pictured left) was so heavy that at one point I thought I was going to throw my neck out," Paulson said. "But it did not matter to me because it was the best dress I've ever had on my body."

Fresh off her SAG, Golden Globe and Emmy Award wins for playing Marcia Clark in *American Crime Story*, Paulson is celebrating the woman who put together all those red carpet looks: Karla Welch,

DITCHING THE SWEATPANTS How Sarah Paulson found her groove



whom the *Hollywood Reporter* just named the industry's most powerful stylist.

Welch, along with Paulson and fellow red carpet standout Ruth Negga, appears on the cover of the magazine's special *Stylists & Stars* issue, which ranks Tinseltown's 25 top stylists.

"Good clothes open doors," Welch quipped when asked the best bit of style advice she ever received.

"I need her to push me out of my sweatpants and my sneakers," Paulson said Tuesday night at a Jimmy Choo-

sponsored dinner honouring the magazine's sartorial stars. John Legend, Justin Timberlake, Dakota Johnson, Jonah Hill, Mary J. Blige and Mahershala Ali were among the well-dressed guests at the private party at The Ponte restaurant.

Though Paulson prefers leisurewear, she loves the ritual of getting ready for the red carpet. Having a spectacular dress to wear helps her achieve the right mindset for a million flashbulbs and screaming fans.

"A lot of people talk about it as being a kind of armour, and it is," she said.

Even with the help of Hollywood's top stylist, the actress said her love of sweatpants has led to some fashion regrets.

"It's not that I regret them. It's just that I know if I get photographed in them at the grocery store, I'll think, 'Oh (expletive). This is when I'm supposed to wear that jacket she told me to wear,'" Paulson said. "Then 800 people on Instagram are like, 'She's such a bum on her night off.' Really? I'm supposed to look fashionable when I'm going out to get half-and-half?"

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

POSH TARGET

Retail giant banks on the Victoria Beckham effect

Target is counting on Victoria Beckham to spice up sales.

The pop-star-turned designer and Target teased looks on Wednesday from a collaboration that go on sale next month, highlighting hot-pink pants suits and whimsical black-and-white dresses. The 200 items priced from \$6 to \$70 also include tops, trousers and rompers for women, as well as some matching children's items.

It's the first foray into children's wear for Beckham, the former Spice Girl who launched her namesake fashion brand in 2008.

"I wanted to offer a collection of clothes to women who either couldn't afford designer prices or didn't want to pay designer prices," Beckham told *The Associated Press*.

"Target is about being inclusive and that is something that is very important to me as a brand as well."

Target announced the collaboration in October, and the items will be available April 9.

Beckham, noting that the collection also includes items like colouring books, says the inspiration was the things she and her daughter Harper do together.

"It's really about me and her and our relationship and our shared experience," Beckham said.

Target pioneered these designer partnerships in the 1990s but has seen the formula copied since then by competitors like the likes of H&M and Gap.

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Forgotten fashion of Expo 67

EXHIBITION

Montreal museum displays dress and uniforms

Fifty years after Montreal hosted a world's fair to mark Canada's centennial, Expo 67 is generally remembered for art, architecture and infrastructure rather than miniskirts.

But that's something Montreal's McCord Museum is trying to change with Fashioning Expo 67, an exhibit that seeks to resurrect what its curator calls a "forgotten moment" in Canadian fashion.

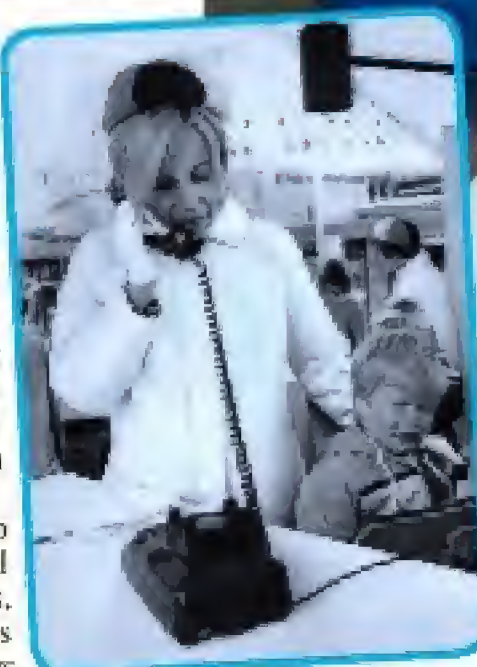
To commemorate the city's 375th birthday and Expo's 50-year anniversary, the museum has assembled more than 60 outfits from the fair, from hostess uniforms to the designer duds that graced the runways of the exposition's numerous fashion shows.

The exhibit also includes archival TV footage, images, documents, sketches and audio interviews with the designers themselves.

From groovy summer dresses worn by roller-skating models to fur coats and ballgowns, Expo 67 was a moment of "tremendous pride" in Canadian fashion, according to exhibit curator Cyn-



Uniforms and dresses from Expo 67 on display at the McCord Museum. Left: A black and white photograph of Expo hostess Jane MacKenzie at the fair in 1967. THE CANADIAN PRESS



thia Cooper.

"Expo created a lot of opportunities for

the fashion milieu," she said. "(Designers') messages were very similar (to that of the fair): of being optimistic, avant-garde, very forward-looking, very modern and contemporary."

She describes 1967 as a time of transition in women's fashion,

when designers were just beginning to make the shift from more formal, structured clothing to the skin-baring, psychedelic styles that would define the late '60s.

That tension between old and new is evident in the exhibit's collection of about a dozen official hostess outfits, designed for the young women who served as official greeters at the fair's 90 pavilions.

It was a time when the miniskirt was just coming into fashion, and uniform designers had

to grapple with whether to embrace the modern style or go with a traditionally professional look.

For the record, Canada played it relatively safe with a light-blue jacket and knee-length skirt combo, designed by Quebec's Michel Robichaud.

Britain, on the other hand, went with a daring striped mini and proudly proclaimed all its hostesses "would wear skirts four inches above the knee and have nice legs," Cooper said.

More than 50 million people

travelled to the island southeast of Montreal between April and October 1967 to visit the various pavilions, exhibits and displays, all designed around the theme Man and His World.

Opportunities for Canadian designers were everywhere, from outfitting dignitaries to showing off their wares at various fashion shows.

The McCord's collection includes four formal gowns designed for Marie-Claire Boucher Drapeau, wife of Montreal's then-

mayor, Jean Drapeau.

Another section shows the colorful, casual summer clothing worn by models on roller skates during a weekly fashion show at the Canadian pavilion known as "the great Canadian fashion caper."

The politics of the day seeped into the garments, despite organizers' best efforts to keep the event neutral.

Quebec designer Jacques de Montjoye shocked a fashion show audience with a dress called "Vietnam": a tunic with a red splotch designed to look like a bloodstain, worn under an American flag-patterned cape.

Another Montjoye creation, a green dress depicting a snow-covered tree, is titled *Mon pays c'est l'hiver* — a tribute to Gilles Vigneault's *Mon pays*, a song that has become an anthem of Quebec's nationalist movement.

Despite the widespread presence of fashion at Expo 67, Cooper isn't sure whether it had a long-term impact on Canadian design.

Unlike the public art and some of the pavilions that are still standing 50 years later, she says the fashion shows were quickly forgotten — perhaps due to what she calls the "ephemeral" nature of fashion itself.

"Maybe it's because the (fashion) field has to always look to the future," she said. "When something is over they have to be look to the next thing and not sit on their laurels remembering what a wonderful moment Expo was."

Fashioning Expo 67 runs from March 17 to Oct. 1.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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The *urban* Cuba you don't know

It's a shame, really: 99 per cent of Canadians visiting Cuba stay in resorts. That's not an exaggeration; it's a quote from the director of Cuba's tourism board. We go for the sun and sand, complain about the resort food, and — while we may do a day trip — go home without really appreciating the island nation. Venture off resort, and you'll encounter a country on the cusp of change, rich in history and home to amazing and resilient people. Here are a few things you'll see.

TEXT AND PHOTOS BY DEAN LISK/METRO CANADA

Eternal Havana

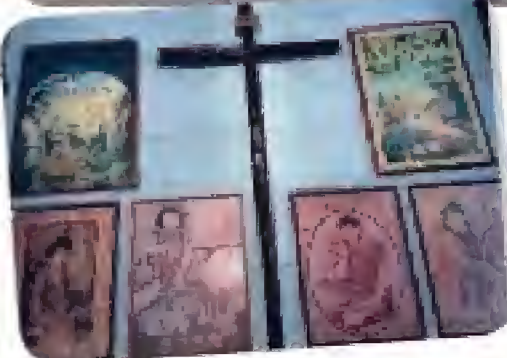
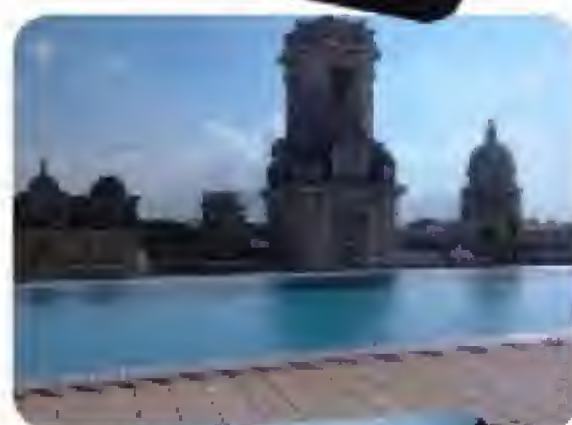
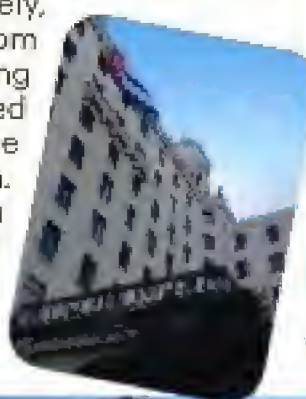
While the sharp details of the cornices, balustrades and mouldings of Havana's patchwork-painted buildings are eroding like water poured over a sugar cube, they are not dead or abandoned spaces. The sounds of daily life still filter through the half-open shutters or the cracked window glass.

A move is underway in Old Havana, founded in 1519, to restore many of these once- and still-elegant buildings using tourism revenue. Others are being restored privately, including a five-storey building across from Parque Central which once housed a shopping arcade and schools. The gutted, sand-blasted and re-painted interior will soon open as the **Gran Hotel Manzana Kempinski La Habana**. The luxury hotel includes a rooftop pool with views of the Great Theatre of Havana and the dome of the Capital.

Rich in history, the **Hotel Nacional de Cuba** stands on a small hill above the wave-etched Malecón sea wall in the Vedado neighbourhood. Built in 1930 with the understanding it would only ever fly the Cuban flag, it is a silent character in national events that have played out since its construction.

Some of the rooms in the eight-floor hotel are named after its famous guests, like Errol Flynn, Fred Astaire, Rita Hayworth and Nat King Cole. A mafia suite pays homage to a summit U.S. gangsters held in the hotel in 1946 organized by Lucky Luciano and Meyer Lansky. An adjoining door opens to the one used by Frank Sinatra and Ava Gardner. The walls of the private bar, open only to hotel guests, is lined with photos of all the famous people who have stayed there over the last 85 years.

While many hotels have in-house restaurants, try exploring Havana's ripening culinary scene instead. Rent an oldtimer (the classic 1950s cars still being used) or a coco taxi (a two-seater car pulled by a bicycle) and head out to one of the city's best restaurants, **San Cristóbal** — where Barack Obama ate when he visited in 2016 — is one the growing number of paladares (privately-owned restaurants, as opposed to state-operated ones) infusing the capital's food scene with innovative takes on traditional dishes. The Cuban-Creole menu includes lobster, steak, fresh local fish and roasted pork.



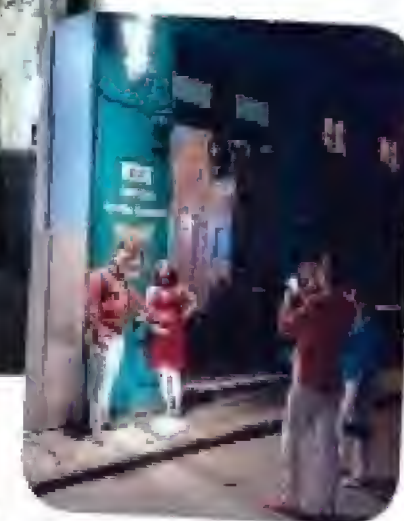
Contemporary Culture

Yes, Havana has — for lack of a better term — hipsters. Lined up two deep along the wall encircling the **Fabrica de Arte Cubano**, a former factory transformed into an exhibition space, they wait to be allowed in to enjoy the music and performances in the Vedado region of the city.

Held in their hands or tucked in the pockets of their skinny jeans and slacks is a card given at the door on which bartenders will record what drinks are ordered. The old factory is a canvas on which Cubans are reflecting their own experiences in a post-Fidel Cuba. Once you are done with the art, music and dancing, you must show your card at the door and pay for your drinks. Lose the card and there is a penalty fee.

If your trip to Fabrica has you convinced you need a lesson in loosening your hips, **Currys Dance School** can help you with your backbone slide. The school is located across the street from Havana's only mosque and was recently renovated to allow more space for lessons, which cost 15 CUC an hour. A major investor in the school is Vancouverite Alessandra Quaglia. Coming to Havana for a number of years for an annual Salsa Festival, she ended up staying for a few extra months to improve her steps, and, after her visit, made the decision to invest in the space. "I just went with it," Quaglia says. "Once you get a taste of it, it's like a bug, an addiction."

To get a sense of how important dance and music is in Havana — and the rest of Cuba — no trip is complete without a visit to Tropicana. It's a bit of a cliché, but this outdoor show has been cha cha cha-ing along for more than 80 years with its head-dressed showgirls, baritone singers and elaborate stage numbers. Even if it's not your thing, you are given a cigar and a bottle of rum (one for four people to share) and your choice of cola or water so you can pour at 'libre' when you are seated.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: A model exhibits an original creation at Fábrica de Arte Cubano; dancers perform an Afro-Cuban dance; diners snap a photo outside San Cristóbal Paladar; the narrow streets of old Havana; and visitors line up outside Fábrica de Arte Cubano.

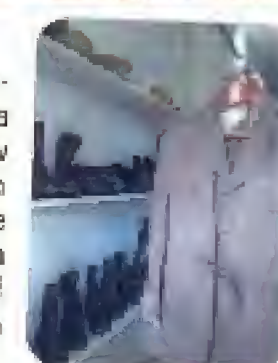
Historical Heroes and icons

With his death in November, you'd expect to see images of el comandante, Fidel Castro, throughout the capital city. His bearded portrait is there, but spying it is rare. You're more likely to see bereted **Che Guevara** — whose image appears prominently on the side of the Ministry of Interior Building — staring back at you from photographs, painting and street art.

More likely to turn your head from Cuban adoration is a literary hero, one from Cuba's liberators from Spain rather than from Capitalism, José Martí. A statue of the poet, journalist and philosopher looms over the Plaza de la Revolución, his bust sits in front of schools, and — standing with a child cradled in one arm and the other raised in defiance and pointing behind him, finger outstretched — staring from the plaza in front of the U.S. embassy.

Still, it's an American whose legend haunts the city and nearby countryside. Like the patron saint of tourism, Ernest Hemingway's memory looms as large as his drinking habits.

Shoulder-to-shoulder tourists pack into **La Bodeguita del Medio** at 10 a.m. for mojitos (the rum, sugar and mint-filled drink inspiring revelers to carve their names into the restaurant's wooden shuttered front facade), wait in line at El Floridita to sip on an afternoon or evening daiquiri, or pay their respect by leaning through the windows into the writer's home, Finca Vigia, a few kilometers outside Havana. There you can see the mounted heads of rare big game animals, bookshelves lined with well-read tomes and **Hemingway's war correspondent uniform** stiffly hanging in the closet off his bedroom. Outside, you can get a bit closer to Hemingway's pet cemetery where he buried his dogs: Black, Negrita, Linda and Neron (his pet cats apparently didn't warrant grave markers).



The authors of these pieces were hosted by Cuba Tourism, which didn't review or approve the stories.

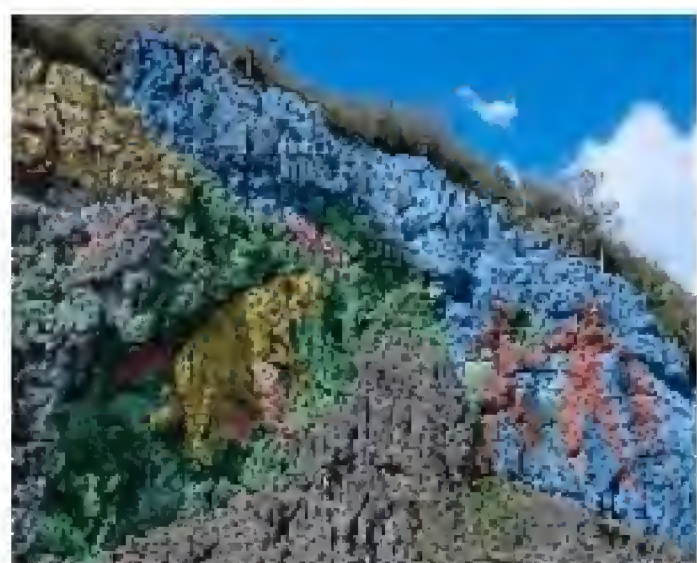
5 AREAS OF CUBA YOU NEED TO VISIT

How safe is Cuba? Well, safe enough that hitchhiking is a part of the culture. Along the roads leading out of the city you will find people whose job it is to flag cars to bring you closer to your destination. Vehicles owned by the government, with empty seats, are obliged to stop. Ask the driver if they would like to be paid for the trip, but it's not always expected. Whether you decide to follow the local example — or rent a car for your stay — here are five places to visit. **METRO CANADA/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICES**



1 Guantanamo

Count the number of times you hear the Guantanamera. Jose Fernandez's song — about a failed romance and dedicated to the women of Guantanamo province — uses words from a poem by beloved Cuban revolutionary and poet Jose Marti. Anyone can belt out the chorus, "Guantanamera, guajira Guantanamera" and throw in a few "oye, oye's." Guantanamo is a province and city in southeastern Cuba that hopes to be known for more than just a military prison and catchy song — one negative, one positive. It's easy to see why Guantanamo would rather be known for something positive, namely its famous song, variations of which are used in the U.S. and Latin America to fight for peace and justice.



3 Viñales

This community in the western end of the island shares its name with the valley, a UNESCO World Heritage Site known for its outdoor activities — hiking, horseback riding — and unique steep-sided hills called mogotes.

During a visit to the region, Fidel Castro suggested the cliff face of one of the mogotes would be perfect for a mural. Local officials took his suggestion and ran with it.

The result is the Mural de la Prehistoria: a primary colour filled image of dinosaurs, humans and monsters. The site is popular with visitors — some even get married below the mural — and a restaurant nearby serves a traditional Cuban meal of rice and beans with pork and chicken. If you decide you'd like to stay overnight, many Cubans have opened their one-story homes so you can rent rooms (even entire houses). Called Casas Particulares, the prices range according to location and the season.



4 Matanzas

No need to search for the fountain of youth, or love, because both pools of slowly dripping water can be found around 50 metres underground in Cuevas de Bellamar near the city of Matanzas. Discovered by a Chinese worker in the 1860s, there are more than 750 metres of tunnels to visit (although the cave is much larger and still being explored).

While it took more than 40,000 years for the cave to develop — and it is still growing — the guided tour lasts 45 minutes and ends with a hot, humid and sometimes slippery staircase (with more than 200 steps) back to the surface. If you feel unsteady, guide Jesus recommends that don't you worry, that's just the water from the fountain of love working its magic on your heart.

If there is an issue above ground in Matanzas take a trip back in time to the Boteca Francesca Dr. E Triolet. While it stopped operating as a pharmacy in 1964, it is now a museum where glass jars and canisters still hold some of the ingredients used to fill prescriptions. Founded in 1882, the pharmacy was famous distributing a coffee syrup used to treat asthma, as well as concocted wine-based remedies for anemia and a scorpion-infused oil for kidney problems.

The city is also known for its Afro-Cuban culture, including Los Muñequitos de Matanzas, a folklore and rumba dance and music group that performs in Ruinas de Matasiete. The world famous group started performing in the 1950s and demonstrate the development of this sensual yet respectful dance and its different styles: yambú, columbia and guaguancó.



2 Baracoa

You need at least four days to properly appreciate this isolated city on Cuba's eastern tip. Until a highway from Guantanamo was built through the mountains in the 1960s, the only way to get here was by sea. This bewitching land of cacao and coconuts, mountains and rivers, begs to be explored. The beaches are rocky and wild, not sandy and pretty. Spend your time exploring and eating. People who complain about the food in Cuba clearly never get off the resort. That's poised to change, as tourism officials begin to actively court independent travellers, as well as the all-inclusive crowd.



5 Bayamo

Wander into Bayamo's stadium during the day — while touring the city in a traditional horsecart — and head to the bleachers to watch players practice, staff spruce up the banners and kids gawk at their heroes. Baseball plays hard to get here. Every town has a stadium, but getting details on games, professional or otherwise, is a challenge. Tickets are cheap but rarely sell out. You can pay double (pennies for locals and dollars for tourists) to sit in the special netted area behind home plate, behind the guy filming the game for TV.

At night, vendors set up tables and stalls outside the gates, and hawk mostly pollo asado (grilled chicken) and roast pork. Get a roast pork sandwich on a soft bun and say 'yes' to a sprinkling of salt. The only thing missing at the game is beer. Apparently it's banned in the interest of players and crowd safety.

TRAVEL NOTES

What you need to know when you go:

Passport

Tourists must have a passport, which should be valid for at least one week after the return date. Anyone planning to work, do business or study in Cuba must have a visa authorized by the Consulate General of Cuba.

Tourist card

Before landing visitors must fill in a tourist card, supplied by their airline, which grants a 90 day stay in Cuba. Do not lose the card. You need to show it when you leave.

Shopping

Shops in hotels, villas and airports sell Cuban cigars, rum and coffee, as well as snacks, arts and crafts, toiletries, books and souvenirs. There are many open-air markets featuring local goods throughout the country. Specialty stores in the main tourist regions also carry high-end European and other imports.

Currency

All goods and services for tourists in Cuba are priced in Cuban Convertible pesos only.

Video and photography

Photos and videos can be taken freely, except in restricted areas, such as military zones. Museums may also have regulations.

Electrical conversion

Cuba's electricity is 110 volts, 60Hz, but most hotels and resorts have 220 volts. Electrical outlets take flat plug prongs.

Clocks

Cuba is on Eastern Standard Time.

Internet

Many hotels and resorts provide a connection, otherwise Wi-Fi is limited to public squares and some hotel lobbies. Buy a 60-minute Wi-Fi card for about \$2.75 Canadian at the airport or your hotel.

Health and insurance

Tourists are required to have travel insurance when visiting Cuba. Insurance can also be obtained when arriving at the airport from Asistur S.A. Many hotels and resorts have doctors on staff or on call. International medical clinics are equipped to handle complex medical conditions.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Diving into biologically rich waters

ADVENTURE

On Sea of Cortez cruise, nature takes centre stage

Tim Johnson
travel@metronews.ca

The mood in the skiff is a little tense, all of us aware that our new little friends can sometimes play a little rough. As we motor out over clear, blue waters toward Los Islotes, a craggy, uninhabited island in the heart of Mexico's Sea of Cortez, the sound is unmistakable, even with the engine on our little craft thrumming away — hearty barks, beckoning us to come join them.

Wetsuits on, we looked up to see two rare blue-footed boobies soar past, their famous feet tucked up tight, nestled into white underbellies. Then it was time for the half-dozen of us to get into the water, a little chilly this time of year.

Within seconds, they come to us, putting on a show — three



A whale shark in the Sea of Cortez passes close to a kayak and a skiff. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

California sea lion pups, adorable, spinning and spiralling past our flippers.

I'm sailing on board the MV Safari Endeavour, a small ship exploring the Sea of Cortez (sometimes called the Gulf of California), the body of water that separates mainland Mexico and the Baja Peninsula. A

UNESCO World Heritage Site and appropriately called the "aquarium of the world" by the famed biologist Jacques Cousteau, this rich marine and avian environment is inhabited by a wide variety of flora and fauna. Big-time plankton blooms and the unique intersection of ecosystems create a place inhabited

by 900 fish species and 32 types of marine mammal, with numerous endemic examples — living creatures found only here.

I'm here with one main purpose in mind: to swim with the massive whale sharks that inhabit these waters.

Doug Coughenour, our captain, says the last exhaustive

nautical survey of the area was carried out back in 1875, by a vessel called the USS Naragansett. Its charts remain the primary tool for his crew today. Commercial craft requiring constantly updated charts, like mega-ships and tankers, do not ply these waters, so the big picture remains something of a mystery.

During the following days, we swim off abandoned beaches and snorkel in waters so clear I can see down dozens of feet, all the way to the colourful coral bottom. At one point, a pod of dolphins surround and leap alongside the ship.

At Bahia Agua Verde, we ride burros brought in by a single family of rancheros along narrow ridge down into an arid valley filled with cacti and coyotes.

And then, on the last full day of the expedition, it's whale shark day. A different kind of nervousness envelopes us as we motor out into the Bahia de La Paz. We've been fully prepared by the ship's crew who, in addition to briefing us on safety and conservation, have warned us over and over again that nothing is guaranteed — these fascinating, huge, spotted crea-

tures (often as big as a school bus) sometimes don't appear.

Wetsuit zipped, fins in place, mask down, it's into the water again. There are calls from our guides that it's coming right at us. A whale shark cruises past a kayak and a skiff, evidence of the wildlife that can be spotted on UnCruise Adventures' Baja's Bounty trip.

A whale shark cruises past a kayak and a skiff, evidence of the wildlife that can be spotted on UnCruise Adventures' Baja's Bounty trip.

I pause, fins still, hanging in the green water as the 7.6-metre shark passes, seemingly impervious to my existence. My heart stopped, I watch it, in parts — first the line of its impossibly wide mouth, then its dazzling spots and stripes and dorsal fin and finally the tail. With its steady back-and-forth motion, I feel like it's waving farewell as it churns its way forward, deep into the green, and on to another destination in the Sea of Cortez.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Tim Johnson was a guest of UnCruise Adventures, which didn't review or approve this story.

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CELEBRATING CANADA'S GIFTS TO THE WORLD

Sing a song for Calgary's National Music Centre

Calgary may be Canada's unofficial country music capital, but all kinds of music are celebrated at Cowtown's National Music Centre.

Part of a new facility built around the King Edward Hotel, one of Canada's oldest blues bars, the NMC catalogues the nation's musical heritage over its five floors and 22 "stages" (the institution's preferred name for its galleries).

Its collection of some 2,000 musical instruments spans over 450 years, with the oldest being a 1560 Italian Virginal, a harpsichord-like instrument that's still playable. Other treasures on display include the 1959 Gibson Les

Paul guitar that Randy Bachman used to write Guess Who hits like Undun and American Woman, Alanis Morissette's harmonica, as well as TONTO, one of the world's first synthesizers.

The NMC is also interactive. Its artists in residence — who have included Australian hit-maker Gotye, Daniel Lanois and Timber Timbre — compose on site, and visitors are encouraged to interact with many of the exhibits. Aspiring musicians aged 13 to 19 can even learn to play an instrument and write music at the weekly Jam Club. And the sandwiches are free.

SEAN PLUMMER



The NMC catalogues the nation's musical heritage, including the Tragically Hip and Celine Dion. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE



Alberta beavers give a dam

It sounds boastful to claim that Alberta has the busiest beavers, but it does. Case in point: the 850-metre long beaver dam located along the southern border of Wood Buffalo National Park. Biologists estimate it would have taken at least 20 years to build, and it's the largest beaver dam ever discovered. First spotted in 2007 in photos from Google Earth, it exists in a remote part of the park, inaccessible to humans but not, presumably, to beavers.

SEAN PLUMMER



ISTOCK



St. Paul, Alberta, built a UFO landing pad in a bid to boost tourism. ISTOCK

Alien Nation

Sure, Canada turns 150 this year, but don't forget that other anniversary: the 50th year of the UFO landing pad in St. Paul.

In a bid to boost tourism, the tiny Alberta town built the world's first UFO landing pad to mark Canada's

1967 centennial and give visiting Martians a place to park their ride.

Tourists who don't happen to spot an alien spacecraft can console themselves with inflatable aliens and novelty T-shirts from the town's gift shop. SEAN PLUMMER

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THIS SPECIAL REPORT WAS CREATED BY CONTENT SOLUTIONS, INDEPENDENT OF METRO EDITORIAL.

World gold next step for Canada, Homan

CURLING

Ottawa rink keen to better silver, bronze in Beijing

The next move for Rachel Homan at the women's world curling championship is the top of the podium after silver and bronze medals in previous appearances.

Homan, third Emma Miskew, second Joanne Courtney and lead Lisa Weagle out of the Ottawa Curling Club open the 2017 world championship Saturday against host China in Beijing.

They won the national championship Feb. 26 beating Michelle Englot in an extra end in St. Catharines, Ont. Homan, Miskew, Weagle and second Alison Kreviazuk were third in their world championship debut in 2013 in Riga, Latvia, and runner-up the following year in Saint John, N.B. Courtney, who will play in her first world championship, was recruited in 2014 after Kreviazuk moved to Sweden.

"The first time you go, everything is so new and foreign," Homan said. "We did our best and came up a little bit short. The second time was in Canada and we did a little bit better. We're fairly young for being able to go our third worlds. We have a bit of experience on our side."

Winnipeg's Jennifer Jones



Rachel Homan's Ottawa rink kicks off the world championship this Saturday in Beijing.

SEAN KILPATRICK/THE CANADIAN PRESS

"We're fairly young for being able to go our third worlds. We have a bit of experience on our side."

Rachel Homan

dominated women's curling at the 2014 Winter Olympics, going undefeated to claim gold. But it's been nine years since Canada won a women's world championship.

Jones took the crown in Ver-

non, B.C., in 2008, which was a year after Homan graduated from high school. The average age of Homan's current team is 28.5. Swiss women have dominated recently winning four of the last five world titles. Binia Feltscher was victorious last year in Swift Current, Sask.

Homan topped the preliminary round in 2014 with a 10-1 record in Saint John, but lost the final to Feltscher.

The 12-hour time difference from Ottawa means Canada plays their first game at 1 a.m. ET on Saturday. Homan and her teammates began adjusting their sleep patterns four days before their departure.

"Yep, definitely going to be in a bubble and far away in a different culture," Homan acknowledged. "I think there's going to be lots of people watching us and cheering us on from all over Canada and we know that."

They'll play in the 17,000-seat Capital Gymnasium, which was the venue for the 2014 men's world championship. Canada's Kevin Koe finished out of the medals there, but won the men's title in 2016. Nolan Thiessen, who was Koe's lead in 2014 and now a Curling Canada consultant, has met with Homan's team to give advice on handling smog and unfamiliar food.

THE CANADIAN PRESS



NHL OILERS IN 7TH HEAVEN AFTER THRILLER WITH BRUINS

Boston Bruins' Brandon Carlo, left, and Edmonton Oilers' Oscar Klefbom battle for the puck during second period on Thursday. The Oilers won 7-4. JASON FRANSON/THE CANADIAN PRESS

IN BRIEF

Report: Fernandez was likely driving during deadly crash

Miami Marlins pitcher Jose Fernandez was the "probable" operator of a speeding boat that crashed into a Miami Beach jetty on Sept. 25, killing the baseball star and two other men, according to a report issued Thursday by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, which investigated the accident.

The 46-page report included a seating chart that had Fernandez at the helm, based on "physical evidence" collected. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Grillo leads at Arnold Palmer Invitational

Emiliano Grillo of Argentina recovered from a rough start in cold weather by running off seven birdies for a 5-under 67, giving him

an early three-shot lead in the first Arnold Palmer Invitational without the beloved tournament host.

Grillo three-putted from 25 feet on No. 3 and took a bogey from 120 yards out in the fairway on the par-5 fourth and it never got any worse. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Eskimos sign D-liner Adams

The Edmonton Eskimos have signed free agent defensive back Johnny Adams. The five-foot-11 native of Akron, Ohio entered the league in 2015 with the Winnipeg Blue Bombers.

In 23 games, he recorded 85 defensive tackles, five special teams tackles and seven interceptions. In September 2016 he was traded to Hamilton where he had 19 defensive tackles in 4 games. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Fighting Irish escape upset grip of Tigers



Notre Dame's Austin Torres blocks a shot by Princeton's Steven Cook on Thursday in Buffalo. MADDIE MEYER/GETTY IMAGES

MARCH MADNESS

Another Big Ten team sent home by Middle Tennessee

The Fighting Irish avoided the dreaded upset from a 12th seed in the first round of the NCAA Tournament.

Barely. Bonzie Colson scored 18 points and the West Region's fifth-seeded Fighting Irish avoided a meltdown in the final two minutes to hang on for a 60-58 win over the Princeton Tigers on Thursday afternoon.

After Notre Dame's Matt Farrell missed the front end of a one-and-one with a 59-58 lead, Princeton had a chance to win on its final possession. Devin Cannady missed an open three-pointer, and Notre Dame's Steve Vasturia pulled down the rebound and was fouled.

"We gave everybody a show, right?" Notre Dame coach Mike Brey said. "We escaped. We've been in a lot of games like that where game situations need a big defensive stop. We've been there. I'm proud we're still alive."

Farrell appeared stunned after the game. He wore a scowl as he

nearly left the floor through the wrong exit after Cannady's miss.

Farrell finished with 16 points but in a game the Fighting Irish (26-9) nearly squandered an 11-point second half lead. They also led 59-54 with 1:10 left.

Spencer Weisz led Princeton with 15 points. The Ivy League champion Tigers (23-7) had a 19-game winning streak going into the NCAA Tournament.

"We had a shot," Princeton coach Mitch Henderson said. "Right now, this one hurts. When you're in the locker-room, it's hard to say a proper 'Thank you,' because it feels like good-bye."

At Milwaukee, another 12th-seeded team was able to pull off the upset.

Middle Tennessee took down a Big Ten team in the NCAA Tournament for the second straight year, beating Minnesota 81-72.

Middle Tennessee defeated Michigan State as a No. 15 seed last March.

This time around, the Blue Raiders (31-4) played like seasoned NCAA veterans with the way they held off the Gophers' comeback attempt from a 17-point deficit.

They will move on to face No. 4 seed Butler in the South's second round on Saturday.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



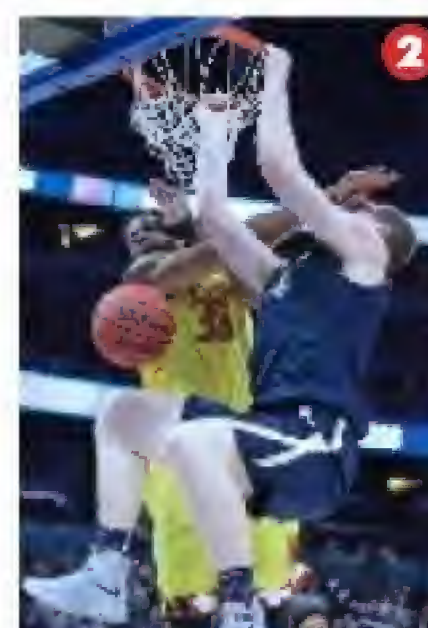
No matter how it looked, we got the win and that's all that matters.

Notre Dame's Bonzie Colson



First round in pictures

PHOTOS BY GETTY IMAGES

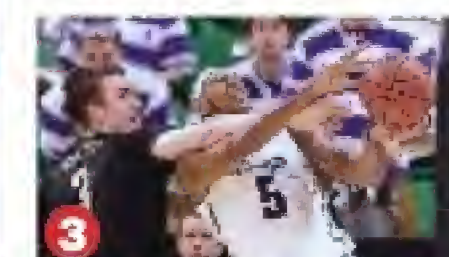


1 Middle Tennessee, a 12th seed, beat fifth-seeded Minnesota 81-72 for the tournament's first upset.

2 No. 11 seed Xavier ousted sixth-seeded Maryland 76-65.

3 Northwestern edged Vanderbilt 68-66 in its tournament debut.

4 Overall No. 1 seed Villanova defeated Mount St. Mary's 76-58.



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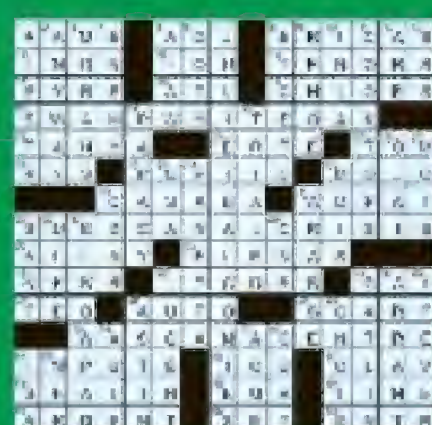
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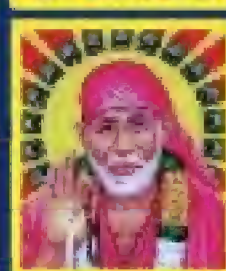
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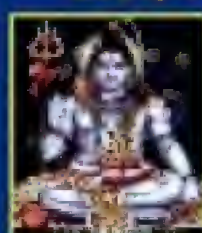
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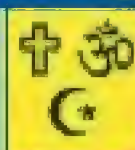
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DAILY TREAT



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MAKE IT TONIGHT

Decadent Chinese 5-Spice Chocolate Chip Skillet Cookie



PHOTO: MARY WISNER

Ceri Marsh & Laura Keogh
For Metro Canada

You need a chocolate-y splurge that will herald the weekend and this skillet cookie rises to the challenge.

Ready in minutes

Prep time: minutes
Cook time: minutes
Serves 4 to 6

Ingredients

- 1/2 cup melted coconut oil (you can also use butter)
- 1 1/2 cups spelt flour
- 1/2 tsp baking powder
- 1/4 tsp baking soda
- 1/2 tsp Chinese 5-spice
- 1/8 tsp salt
- 1 egg
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1/4 cup brown sugar
- 2 tsp vanilla extract
- 1/2 cup chocolate chips

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 350.

In an 8-inch oven proof skillet, add coconut oil and place it in the oven to melt. Remove skillet and pour out the melted oil into a glass measuring cup, leaving behind enough to grease your pan; set aside to cool.

2. In a medium bowl, whisk the flour, baking powder, baking soda, Chinese 5-Spice and salt. In a separate bowl, whisk the egg and then add the sugars and extract. Stir until blended. Add the coconut oil and mix until blended. Pour the sugar mixture into the flour and mix until combined.

3. Scrape batter into prepared skillet making sure it is evenly distributed. Bake cookie for 18 to 20 minutes or until outer edges are browned and puffed. Let cool in the skillet. Serve in skillet or turn out; cut into wedges.

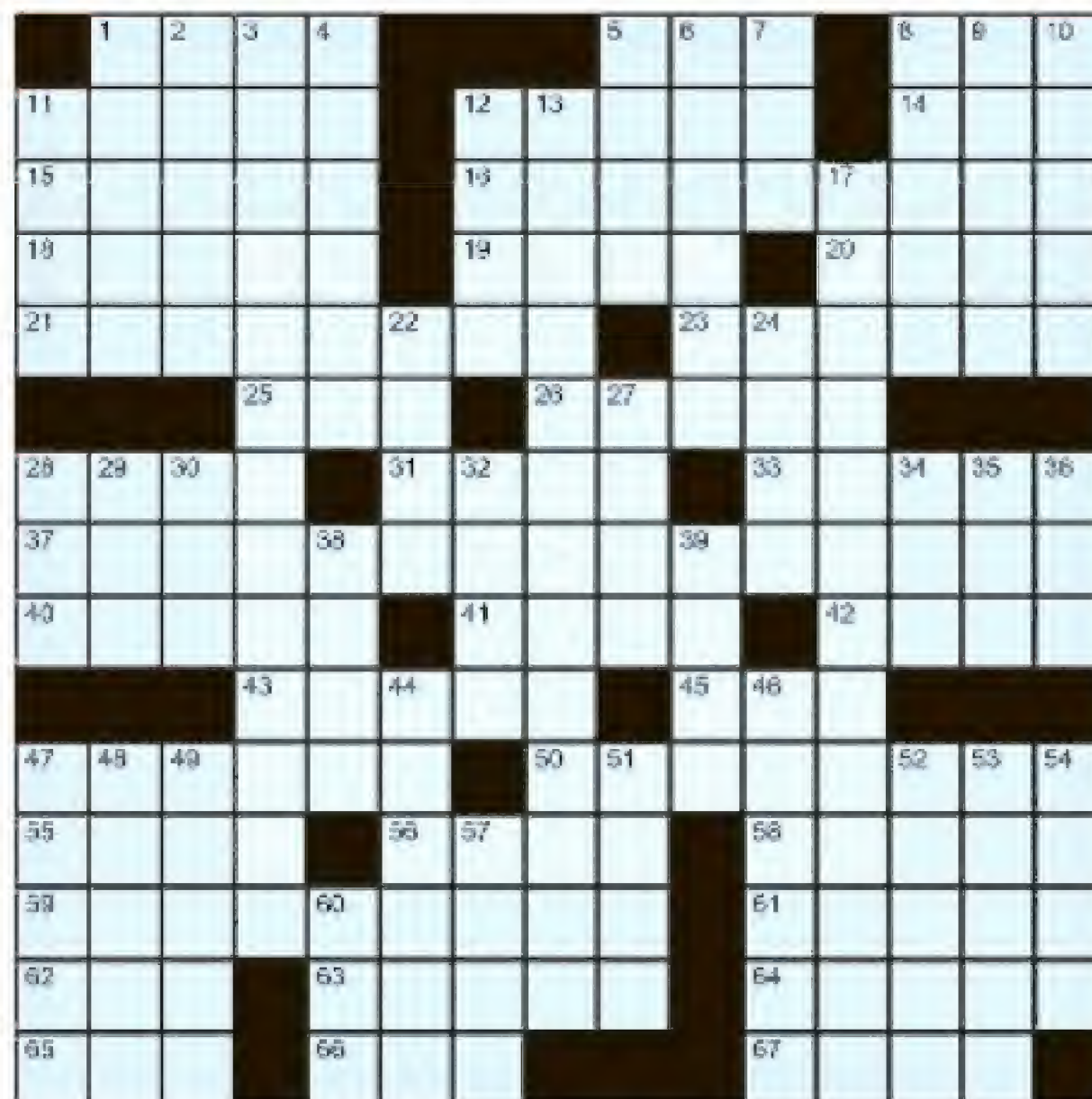
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CROSSWORD Canada Across and Down

BY KELLY ANN BUCHANAN

ACROSS

1. Vault
5. Initials-sharers of Tina Fey's frequent co-star
8. 'Free' suffix
11. Irish actor Mr. Farrell
12. Attempt
14. Chemical suffix
15. Latin for 'in the meantime' [abbr.]; 2 wds.
16. Effects everlastingness
18. 'Sleep'-meaning prefix
19. Info-finding documents, e.g.
20. Harness
21. Ireland, poetically
23. Isolate, as a stranded castaway
25. 'Earth'-meaning prefix
26. Quizzes
28. 'Ranch' suffix
31. A Doll's House wife
33. Important invention
37. 1911 work by Irish dramatist George Bernard Shaw; 3 wds.
40. Does better than B+; wd. + letter
41. American univ.
42. Not in use
43. Work the eggs in the bowl
45. US politics elephant gr.
47. Run by the other runner again
50. New ___ (Period when archaeological site the Ceide Fields in County Mayo in Ireland was created)
55. "May ___ you a question?"
56. "___ you want pizza instead?" (fake-out query)
58. Better skilled
59. Potpie morsels; 2 wds.
61. Profits



was created)

55. "May ___ you a question?"
56. "___ you want pizza instead?" (fake-out query)
58. Better skilled
59. Potpie morsels; 2 wds.
61. Profits

62. Shiba ___ (Non sporting dog)
63. Some electronics
64. Provide, as with some trait
65. Father
66. Fuss
67. Nutrition arnts.

DOWN

1. "Me too!"; 3 wds.
2. Out on ___ (Not in one's comfort zone)
3. Book of 1939 by Irish author James Joyce; 2 wds.
4. Complete
5. Buy ___ of dishes (Expand one's

- tableware)
6. Analyzes
7. Prefix with 'thesis'
8. Stupifies
9. Barbara of "Gone with the Wind" (1939)
10. Intervening, in law
11. Money
12. Prefix to 'ferous'

- (Conveying air)
13. Annual parade in March in cities such as Montreal and Toronto; 3 wds.
17. Music group, perhaps marching in an event such as #13-Down; 3 wds.
22. Montreal refusals
24. Food package abbr.; 2 wds.
27. 'Grey' tea
28. Alphabet trio
29. Actress, Charlotte ___
30. Chg. card percentage
32. Beatles: "Two ___"
34. Yore
35. 'Ether' suffix
36. Caustic stuff
38. Derisive cries!
39. Palm starch
44. Crustacean that has 14 legs
46. Hurling siege engine of ancient Rome
47. Unyielding
48. Make money, ___ living
49. Pretension person
51. Flip a coin
52. Village in southeast Saskatchewan
53. Class/sort, in biology
54. Gaelic
57. Home contractor's gig
60. US intelligence org.

IT'S ALL IN THE STARS Your daily horoscope by Francis Drake

Aries March 21 - April 20
Today will have some challenges, because whatever you do, you will encounter obstacles. You might feel like you're behind the 8-ball. Good luck.

Taurus April 21 - May 21
Your efforts with a group, or perhaps a friend, will be stymied because of some kind of limitation. It could be financial. There's not enough money in the coffers.

Gemini May 22 - June 21
You are high-viz right now. Nevertheless, a partner or close friend might object to what you want to do. This will create problems for you. Easy does it.

Cancer June 22 - July 23
Do not get involved in discussions about religion, politics or racial issues today, because an authority figure will overrule you or shut you down. Just keep a low profile.

Leo July 24 - Aug. 23
Your plans to investigate how to share or divide something likely will be met with resistance. Not everyone is ready to endorse your ideas. Perhaps you should wait another day?

Virgo Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
No matter what you try to do to break out of your rut, some kind of barrier will hold you back today. This is a poor day to ask for permission or an endorsement. Don't ask for anything.

Libra Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
A boss or authority figure at work might squelch your plans. This is why you seem to be world-weary at work today. Just keep on trucking, one day at a time.

Scorpio Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
Children might add increased responsibility today. Plus, plans to socialize and have fun will be met with obstacles. Something will hold you back.

Sagittarius Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
This is not a good day to ask for permission or anything from a parent or an older family member. His or her answer will be "Talk to the hand."

Capricorn Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
It's easy to fall into worry mode today. Remember: "Worry is like a rocking chair. It gives you something to do, but gets you nowhere."

Aquarius Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
Your finances look a bit bleak today. (Why is there always so much month left at the end of the money?) And so it goes.

Pisces Feb. 20 - March 20
You cannot ignore your duties and responsibilities today. It's just a fact. Don't try to break free. Just suck it up and do what is expected.

CONCEPTIS SUDOKU by Dave Green

Every row, column and box contains 1-9

	6	9				2	8	
8			7		6			1
1			8					5
2			9					3
	5	8				9	1	
3			5					4
9			1					8
7			6		5			2
	2	1				4	5	

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